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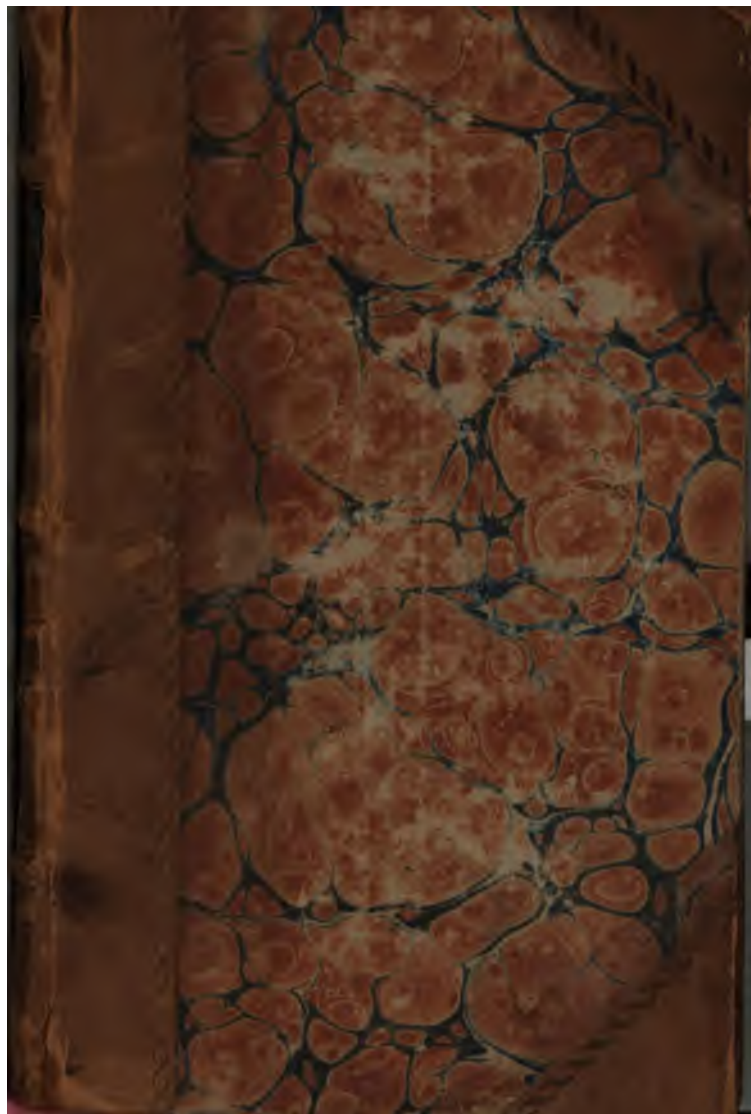
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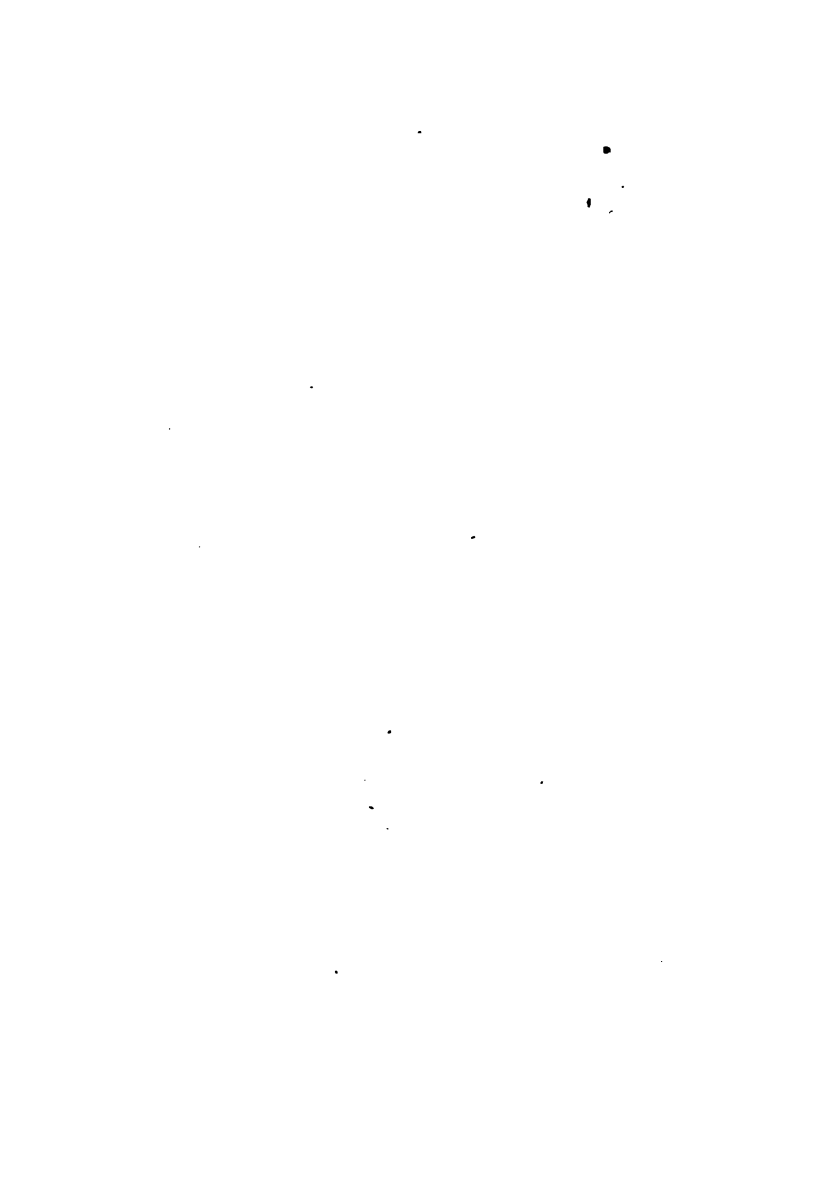
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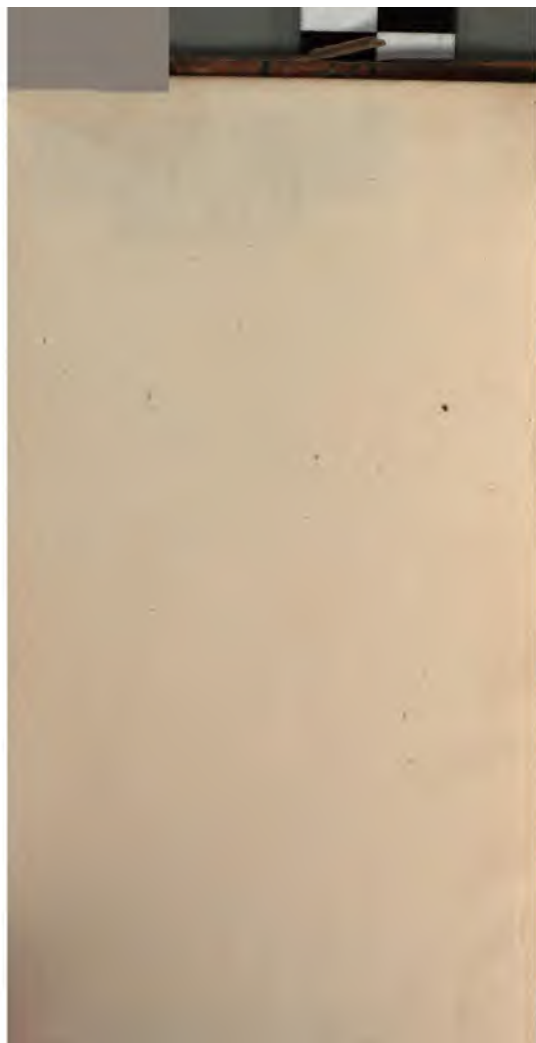




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**THE**  
**FORTUNATE EMPLOY,**  
*&c.*

THE  
HISTORY OF THE  
CITY OF LONDON





There now do you see that striped cat? at the bottom of the hill, in a tree of the same kind, it is seen.

THE *v. J. H. 1817.*  
**FORTUNATE EMPLOY;**  
OR,  
**THE FIVE ACRES PLOUGHED.**

A TALE OF REAL LIFE.

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**" Labour his portion.....  
And as revolving seasons changed the scene,  
From heat to cold, tempestuous to serene;  
Though every change still varied his employ,  
Yet each new duty brought its share of joy."**

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By the Author of  
**" AFFECTION'S GIFT," " SOLACE OF AN INVALID,"  
" SAMBRE," &c.**

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LONDON :  
**J. HATCHARD AND SON, PICCADILLY.**

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1827.

64





**THE**  
**FORTUNATE EMPLOY.**

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**With early morn what time the cock first crows,  
The simple patient labourer arose,  
Till late at eve around the crackling hearth,  
His little children soothed him with their mirth.  
In toil unwearied rolled his peaceful day,  
Nor wars nor tumults marked his noiseless way ;  
For “ to be born, to suffer, and to die,”  
The poor man said, “ is all my history,”**

**DE LILLE.**



THE  
FORTUNATE EMPLOY.

&c.

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MY friend, Charles Eveleigh, was once rich in domestic blessings, but the withering blight of calamity passed over his joys : Death entered his dwelling, and made the fair and the innocent his prey, leaving the bereaved husband and father, like the young tree of the forest, blasted in its full luxuriance. For a time, the sources of consolation seemed closed to the wretched Eveleigh : the blow was so sudden, that it left

him no power even to raise a supplication that he might be supported. At length he endeavoured to say with *sincerity*, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth to him good."

Yet the heart would too often rebel, as he looked at his desolate home ; for while those affections, which are the best part of humanity, cling around it, many a tear, in spite of the glorious prospects of immortality and the tender conviction of reunion, will be shed on the spot where the revered and the loved repose. To repine at the dispensations of that Being, whose beneficence is as boundless as his power, and whose ways are inscrutable to finite intelligence, is doubtless presumption in the creatures of his hand ; but it is surely contrary to every disclosure we have of his goodness, to suppose that he will impute as a crime the weakness of those who cannot find (for awhile) even in the firm conviction of another life, a remedy for *all* the evil which afflicts us in the present.

But though Eveleigh felt as a man bereft of earthly hope, yet he was a Christian, and he knew it was his duty to seek the alleviations which God has vouchsafed to the woes his chastening hand inflicts. His soul gradually awakened from the torpor of grief: the first asylum it sought was the sanctuary of the Almighty; the first relieving sigh he heaved, was at the footstool of his altar.

As a subordinate means of alleviation, and one suited to that restlessness which is the invariable concomitant of grief, he yielded to the earnest entreaties of a friend united to him by that firmest bond of social intercourse, a congeniality of religious principles and feelings, to accompany him to the continent. Directed, influenced, and sanctified by the high principle of a genuine faith, the association proved most pleasing, and in the varieties of scenery and society into which he was thus imperceptibly drawn, the mind of Eveleigh was in some degree spared that exquisite misery expe-

rienced when it relaxes from the extreme tension of grief, that moment when memory seems suddenly to recover its power to rush upon all we have lost ; and to discover what it hardly dared to believe, that the heart has become a cold and desolate void, instead of being the seat of the affections and the well spring of joy. Eveleigh was an enthusiast of nature in the most exalted meaning of the term, because in the contemplation he ever associated the grand, the useful, and the fair forms, which gratified his senses, with the moral nature of man, the dignity of his soul, and its immortal destiny ; regarding all he beheld in external nature as intended by the great Creator, not only to minister to the comfort and delight of man, but to assist in the development of those intellectual energies which connect us with high and pure intelligences. While he marked with delighted eye the endless diversity of existence, he learnt to regard his own heart as one of them, was led to ponder upon its tenden-

cies, to detect its waywardness, and to watch with a vigilant attention its ceaseless fluctuations. While his imagination was exalted with the idea of the Deity throned in the immensity of his works, and his bosom felt the expanding influence of the thought, his heart acknowledged a subduing sense of the justness of his authority, and the constraining power of his tender mercies. Fraught with sentiments of this nature, it will be readily believed that Eveleigh found in the rich and beautiful scenery of France, and the awful and sublime displays of creative power presented in the Alpine wonders of Switzerland, objects which gave amplitude to his better thoughts, composure to his harassed spirit, and that while the contemplation enlarged and elevated every faculty of his soul, his heart was soothed, and its anxious disquietudes lulled into that gentle melancholy which is so friendly to the best and most virtuous sensibilities of our nature.



Nearly two years were thus pleasingly, if not happily passed, when Eveleigh was summoned to England, to take possession of a small estate in Essex bequeathed to him by a gentleman to whom he was godson, but whom he had not seen from the years of his boyhood, when he sometimes passed a part of his summer holidays with the old gentleman, in company with his mother, who had been his ward; but since the period of her decease the communication, from various causes, had gradually become less frequent, and at length ceased altogether, yet without forgetfulness on the one part, or ingratitude on the other.

As the mind of Eveleigh was by nature very far above feeling elation at the mere acquisition of the world's wealth, and his peculiar situation had rendered him even more decidedly indifferent, he felt sincere regret at the decease of an individual associated in his memory with those days when life was enjoyed in all the vivid freshness of

youthful hope, days to which few hearts can revert without experiencing emotions of a very mingled nature.

"The scenes we loved, the friends we valued best,  
Tumultuous thronging thick upon the breast,  
Live o'er again,"

and with them how many sensibilities are aroused from their dormancy !

As it was necessary to visit the property thus unexpectedly devolved to him, Eveleigh, on his return to England, determined to travel into Essex in his favourite mode, horseback, as it was at that lovely season of the year when the soft air of commencing autumn had taken place of the garishness of summer, and the landscape presented that full luxuriance and rich tinting which is so delicious to the mental taste of a genuine lover of nature. Being at all times his practice in travelling to avoid as much as possible the high roads, Eveleigh passed into Essex through the sylvan scenery of Epping forest, at this

time presenting a peculiarly beautiful appearance, well suiting his mood of mind.

Lingering in these scenes of secluded and tranquil beauty, the evening was closing when he reached a neat country inn within a few miles of the termination of his journey. Here he determined to pass the night; and as he entered the gateway in that pensive mood which was become habitual to him, and which the solitary journey he had taken had tended to increase, he was roused from his half reverie by the voice of the landlord calling loudly to the ostler in a distant part of the yard to bring Mr. Bentley's horse: while, instantly perceiving Eveleigh, he directed a boy to take him to the stable. The name of Bentley is a common one, but the repetition of it awakened the quick associating faculties of Eveleigh,—memory in a moment rushed to his schoolboy days, when he remembered he had been a visitor to a family of that name, a youthful member of it having been his selected school companion, and that his

father's residence was not far from the new acquisition he was on the eve of visiting.

All this passed through his mind in an instant, while his enquiring eye sought the individual whose name had aroused the train of thought. He was not long ungratified, for as he dismounted, he perceived a gentleman approach from a room in which a large party were assembled.

The ostler now appeared with a beautiful high-bred horse, and the gentleman advanced to mount it. A single glance at his features convinced Eveleigh that he saw his old schoolfellow, whose countenance was of that description which is little changed by the elapse of a few years. A light heart, buoyant spirits, unbounded health, easy circumstances, and the salutary pursuits of agriculture, had preserved it from those expressive indications of mental conflict, which minds of reflection and hearts of susceptibility experience, and which gives maturity to youthful features,

dims the eye once bright with hope and joy, and in fact anticipates the march of time.

The countenance of Eveleigh was marked by that pensive meditative sadness which is so touching, and so interesting, but the benevolent affections of his soul were so alive, his reminiscences of youth so strong, that a glowing warmth suffused his cheek, and a smile, the lingering beam of brighter days, gave to his features much of that happy expression which had marked them in early youth. When therefore, with that cordial urbanity which marked his deportment, he advanced towards Bentley, and extending his hand, said, "Surely I have the pleasure to recognize in you, sir, a very beloved companion and schoolfellow;" Bentley instantly knew him. "Can it be possible," he exclaimed, "that you are my friend Eveleigh.—Why where, my generous fellow, did you spring from? and what port are you bound for? I shall stop your course, however, wherever it tends,



for you must positively become my guest.—Are you alone?" he added, looking round. "Entirely so," replied Eveleigh, while the painful conviction shot cold through his heart, and threw a cloud over the bright smile which had greeted the friend of his youth. A few sentences explained his situation, and the design of his journey. The answer of Bentley was characteristic: his features assumed a momentary solemnity.—"Well, my dear Charles, you very well know that in all concerns of life and death, we must conclude with 'God's will be done.' You have done your duty, and fate must guide the rest—grieving is folly.—Come, I see your nerves are weak, let me try to cheer you up: that is a snug little estate the old boy has left you."

Eveleigh declined accepting the invitation of his light-hearted friend; for feeling considerable fatigue, he determined to remain at the inn that night, promising to breakfast with Bentley the ensuing morning. He learnt from him, that his father

had been deceased some years, and that he now conducted a large agricultural concern, which on that event had devolved to him.

The morning was delicious : a halo of light and lustre seemed shed over the rural scenery which Eveleigh passed. It is true, it no where presented any thing approaching to the picturesque or the sublime ; but every where the hand of patient industry was visible, and the gentle undulations of richly cultivated fields, interspersed with woodland and little romantic retired copses, rendered the ride delightful. So great indeed had the improvements changed the appearance of the country, each scene of which was vividly painted upon his memory, that he could hardly believe he was tracing the same path he had so frequently done formerly. Open heaths were converted into fruitful fields, infant plantations risen to umbrageous woods, cottages appeared on spots remembered as solitudes, and farm-houses had assumed the elegant

exterior of villas. Eveleigh was doubting whether one of these last species of building, peculiarly distinguished for its tastefulness, which appeared through the vistas of a beautiful plantation, could be the improved residence of Bentley — the substantial farm-house, where he had been the joyous young visitor ;—when Bentley himself appeared at a gate leading from the paddock, at the extremity of which the elegant structure was erected. He was followed by three or four fine sporting dogs, two of which, coupled together, nearly drew from off his feet a weakly looking peasant boy apparently about twelve years of age, who conducted them by a line attached to their collars. Bentley, on observing Eveleigh, immediately exclaimed, “ Welcome, my good fellow ; I have been expecting you these two hours. —What, you were in doubt, were you ? I saw your incredulous look just now ; when you were at that gate, you did not know the old farm, did you ? You see I have made



some alteration in Lavender Hall.—Do you like the outside of my house? if you do not, I hope you are ready for the fare within.” Eveleigh answered sincerely to this rapid and self-complacent address, that he much admired the tastefulness of the villa and surrounding grounds.

“It is reckoned pretty,” rejoined the possessor, “and what is better, the plan cost me nothing, except indeed a few good dinners, and dozens of madeira; for Harry Level is my particular friend, and is considered astonishingly clever in laying out grounds and drawing elevations, I think he calls them. It cost, however, a pretty penny to put his clever plans in practice, I can tell you; It is well my poor father could not peep out of his grave, for he would surely think me in the high road to ruin; but you know, my good fellow, dash is now the word, and you may slave for ever without profiting any thing worth having, if you are afraid to venture.” When a man makes *self* the theme of his dis-

course, there is not much chance of brevity in his remarks; and Eveleigh was too good a judge of human nature not to know that vanity is a foible which rejects the most remote appearance of correction. Seeing therefore, in an instant, that his friend's self-love and he lived so lovingly together, he determined not to shake this happy credulity, but to make him one of those moral studies which of all others were most pleasing to his observant and reflective mind. It is uncertain how long the egotism of Bentley might have continued, had he not been interrupted by the scream of the boy, whose strength being exhausted by the struggles of the dogs, he was no longer able to confine them, and they escaped with the line he had vainly attempted to retain in his grasp. Bentley, excessively angry, gave him two or three sharp cuts across his back with a cane he carried, and commanded him not to yell in that manner, but to run over the field to which the dogs had escaped, and at his

peril to recover them. The boy, trembling in every joint, obeyed the mandate, although Eveleigh ventured to hint that he appeared unequal to the task. He found, however, his interference would but aggravate things, and therefore desisted.

Dismounting from his horse, upon the beauty and merits of which Bentley dilated very scientifically, or rather technically, he followed his guidance through a retired horse way leading to the back front of the mansion, which presented some appearance of an agricultural residence. Extensive stabling, dog-kennels, barns, and other essential offices for the use of a large farming concern, were conveniently and judiciously arranged, and although unseen from the house, were distinguished by a unity of style with it.

Passing a circuitous path, which led by a gentle ascent through a shrubbery of choice trees immediately to the house, Bentley conducted his visitor by a light iron flight of steps to a viranda extending

the whole length of the garden front of the house, the French windows of which were now thrown open to admit the balmy air of the morning into the spacious apartments. Pots of choice odoriferous plants were placed at intervals near the windows, and every thing indicated that female taste had contributed to embellish this almost Italian villa. Eveleigh hinted this to his friend, who laughing, replied, "Did not I tell you I was a Benedict, Charles? Well, in truth I am such an old married man, I forgot that amongst my goods and chattels I have a wife, and a good little wife, I assure you. You remember my mother, Charles, how she used to pride herself upon her pots of butter, her light cakes, and her syllabubs, all which we did her the honour to devour. Well, though my Maria is not over clever at these things, you see she has taste in others; and after all, what have we servants for, but to make butter, and bake and milk—not indeed that mine have much to do in the latter employment, for

my wife considers a great dairy a great bore; we only, therefore, keep two cows to supply ourselves.—Look there, (pointing to a rich meadow at the bottom of the lawn,) there are my cows; are they not beautiful creatures, quite park ornaments? I would not take thirty pounds for that spotted one, just for her beauty, for she is not a very good dairy cow. But Maria says, it gives such animation to a landscape to see cattle feeding, and of course so much in view of the house as our meadows are, we must consider beauty a little.”

This dissertation on beautiful cows was uttered in so rapid a manner, that Eveleigh in vain attempted reply to the queries it contained; and he was not sorry when it ended, as his morning ride had quickened his appetite. Nothing loth, therefore, he accepted the invitation of Bentley to enter one of the open windows leading to an elegant breakfast-room. Upon the ample table was spread a



luxurious repast of ham, tongue, potted fowls, manchets, butter, tea, coffee, chocolate, and guinea fowls, eggs, with various other delicacies, but no one appeared to do the honours of it. Bentley rang the bell; a servant lad in neat livery appeared. "Where is your mistress?"—"I will ask Louisa, sir." In a moment Louisa appeared, Eveleigh thought his fair hostess was entering, so tasteful was the morning costume of Louisa. "My mistress, sir," she said, as well as affectation would suffer her, "desires me to say she will be down in a few minutes, but requests you will not wait for her."—"That I certainly shall not," said Bentley, in a tone of pique; "tell John to bring the urn."—"Yes, sir," and the damsel closed the door. "Come, my good fellow," said Bentley, seating himself before the tea equipage, "I am a famous tea maker, for Maria keeps me in practice. Do pray consider yourself quite at home, and endeavour to make a breakfast if you can." Then looking over

the table—"What a parcel of fools I have about me," he said, ringing the bell violently. "We have some famous savory pies in the house, but they think of nothing without being told; or I suppose they intend them for their own breakfast."—"Pray do not have them for me," said Eveleigh, "your table is far too richly spread to require any addition; I assure you, I never take any thing but the most simple food, and with such delicate bread and delicious butter as this, nothing more is required." The savory pies, however, were peremptorily desired to be brought, and the reproof for the omission rounded by an oath, which made Eveleigh start. A few minutes after the mistress of the mansion appeared: she was young, rather pretty, and dressed in an elegant dishabille; and had it not been for an affected languor intended to impress the beholder with a notion of her refinement and sensibility, would have been pleasing, but it evidently gave such a restraint to her cha-

rafter as entirely to destroy that easy grace which forms the supreme charm of beauty, and which confers even on homeliness itself an interest little inferior to the fascinations of loveliness. She apologized for her delay in giving welcome to her husband's friend, attributing it to the fatigue she had experienced on the preceding day in a botanizing party, in the fascinations of which herself and friends had wandered to so great a distance from home, that the evening had closed upon them ere they thought of returning. "Tell the conclusion of your adventure, my lady botanist," said Bentley, "or shall I? The science will not profit much by your ramble, for you left your collection of plants in a wood some three miles distance."—"I suppose I shall never hear the last of that careless trick of Harry Level's," replied the lady, "but I assure you I had nothing to do with it; I was too tired to think of any thing but my anticipated repose on the sofa."



Some remarks upon this delightful and fashionable pursuit, however, soon convinced Eveleigh that his fair hostess could talk more correctly of her party and her fatigue, than she could of the principles of the science which had beguiled her so far ; and he could not help reflecting on the folly of vain pretension, and how egregiously those are mistaken who think to please by assuming a character, or pretend to a knowledge they do not in reality possess, at the expense of that frank and unaffected ease which marks the deportment, when nature is suffered to display itself freely, unperturbed by affectation and unsullied by vanity. The influence of circumstances upon the character were never more strikingly exemplified than in George Bentley. His father, by a steady course of industry, integrity, and vigilant attention to the minutia of his employment, had realized an ample fortune.

During his life, George had been kept diligently to attend the routine of agricul-

tural duties, and hence had acquired a practical knowledge of the occupation; and was obliged, much against his will, to submit to what he termed the grovelling ideas of his father and mother, who each in their peculiar department personally superintended the labours of their domestics, and in some instances united with them in the fulfilment.

At the period when, as a school-boy, Eveleigh was at the house as a visitor, it exhibited what is now scarcely to be seen—a plain substantial mansion, in which the generous host and careful dame, with unrefined but cordial welcome, entertained a happy circle.

There, more than once in the revolving year, “distinction fled the board,” and master, dependents, and happy young guests, were upon a temporary equality; the sun-burnt labourer regarding with grateful pleasure his master as his friend, and in his complacent smile and familiar joke feeling himself elevated in his own

eyes, inducing that self-respect which it should be the study of all to cherish in the peasantry of the land, that most valuable class of the community from whose labours it derives its strength and prosperity.

Lavender Hall, at the period when Eveleigh first knew it, preserved its mark of distinction in a large piece of ground appropriated to the cultivation of that fragrant plant. The situation was dry and salubrious. A large garden, rich in fruit, gay with handy flowers, and useful in a variety of fine culinary vegetables, displayed its simple attractions over a low hedge composed of sweet-briar and laurel, which divided it from a broad gravel path leading directly from the road to the entrance of the house. On the left were arranged the barns, stables, and offices, which, with the ample farm-yard and its numerous stock of domestic fowls and animals, were all in full view of the parlour window, which was of ample dimensions, shaded by a white jessamine and climbing

rose. This parlour was large and plainly furnished, the only superfluities being some fine old china jars, bowls, and caudle cups. The high chimney-piece was adorned with curious carving, as were the beams which supported the ceiling and the mouldings and door frames of the apartment ; within the fire-place a spiked stove for burning wood, exhibited the polishing genius of the house damsel, as did the low brass fender ; and the richly carved ebony legs of an immense side-table formed of one slab of grey marble. Upon this was arranged a goodly set of glasses, beakers, and decanters, and two handsome knife-cases left open to display the silver-handled knives and forks regularly placed within.

A Scotch carpet, of no very tasteful pattern, or fine texture, covered the floor to the front of the heavy mahogany chairs, the latter surrounded by brass-headed nails ; beyond it, the floor was bright with the labours of the already mentioned house damsel with her well waxed plough brush,

as were the stairs, which (uncarpeted) descended into this room. At the end, near the window, stood Mr. Bentley's bureau, and above it an old-fashioned weather-glass, which had been his father's, and which was so faithful, that it was become proverbial in the country—"as true as Mr. Bentley's weather-glass." To complete the comforts of this apartment, we must name the two ample armed chairs duly placed each side of the fire-place, well cushioned, with a large bracket by the side of each for the convenience of a candlestick, or any thing required by the occupiers of the chairs. A large circular table occupied the centre of the apartment. The possessors of this comfortable mansion, every part of which was in unison with what we have described, exhibited a similar appearance of plainness and an ostentatious simplicity. Mr. Bentley's ample brown frock, neat marcella waistcoat, fine white linen, &c. indicated at once a due attention to respectable exte-



rior, and a sense of propriety in the distinctions of dress; while the grave, but rich silk gown, beautifully plaited cap, and neat plain kerchief of Mrs. Bentley, indicated to the beholder that correct taste, mental purity, and sensible mind, which it is so pleasing to observe in the female sex, and which perhaps they little think are betrayed in the trifling peculiarities of dress. Such was the former state of Lavender Hall and its ancient possessors. How great the change which a few revolving years had effected, when it assumed its new title of Prospect Lodge! We leave it to the imagination and experience of our readers to picture all that luxury can devise, or wealth can purchase, of embellishments or furniture as combining to render the new termed farm desirable or elegant.

George Bentley had long confined himself with a very ill grace to the simple manners and monotonous habits of his parents; for he had formed some thoughtless acquaintance, who were continually

rallying him upon his want of spirit, in unceasingly heaping up money instead of "making it fly," as they expressed it. Upon their decease, therefore, finding himself possessed of an ample fortune, he determined, he said, not to slave as his father had done, but to dash away as an experimental and scientific agriculturist.

A quick transition from restraint to perfect liberty of action is not favourable to the character. Novelty gives undue value to acquisition, and as human nature is ever prone to pass into extremes, Bentley resolved not to be exceeded by those who had began life with him, in those concomitants of wealth, an elegant residence, rich furniture, fine horses, sporting essentials, and a luxurious table, with a large domestic establishment. To aid him in this proposed plan of life, and to grace his new residence, he married a young lady whom he had met with at a ball, and been charmed with her dashing appearance: she chanced to be as thoughtless and nearly as vain as

himself, well read in novels, and possessing the superficial knowledge which is usually obtained in a fashionable female seminary; the wealth of her husband quickly induced her to aim at becoming the model of her neighbourhood in dress, furniture, and equipage, and the elegant, the clever, the accomplished Mrs. Bentley, soon became what she wished, the *fashion* in the vicinity of Prospect Lodge, the patroness of assemblies, music parties, botanical displays, and all the elegancies of society, and her beautiful ponies and fancy phaëton were the admiration of the county. It is hardly necessary to add, that the luxurious table, the choice wines, and open hospitality of Bentley, with the elegant taste, the charming manners, and pleasing conversation of Mrs. Bentley, (for all these qualities seemed to follow in the train of wealth,) drew around the young couple a circle of butterfly friends; and although the fortune of Bentley was too ample to be materially injured by this mode of life and



accumulated expenses, yet his disposition became changed, for the servile homage which his wealth procured him from the superficial and self-interested made him dictatorial and haughty. From a liberal minded and generous youth, for as such he was loved by Eveleigh, he became imperceptibly altogether selfish, concentrating all his enjoyments within himself, the circle of his sympathies daily becoming more and more contracted, taking little concern in the joys or sorrows of his fellow-creatures. Pride, which induces a forgetfulness of our dependent situation, both on the Supreme Being and on the aid of our fellow-beings, is indeed a much more frequent cause of unkind actions and contempt than malevolence. Of this latter we must acquit Bentley. His unconcern, neglect, or contempt, were the fruits of forgetting himself and his condition.

Perhaps, indeed, in a flow of good-humour, he would confer a benefit on one for whose welfare he was in fact indifferent; but

it could not be said to be the dictate of generous principle, it rather might be termed a caprice of fancy. Eveleigh was too penetrating not easily to perceive the change in his old school-fellow, or rather to perceive the development of his real character; but as he had none of that fastidious delicacy which loses patience at the exhibition of mere folly, (and as yet he had not observed deeper shades,) and always endeavoured, in his observation on man, to separate the real character from the extraneous impulses it had received from casual circumstances, he determined not to form a too hasty judgment of the individuals whose hospitality to him at least seemed genuine and cordial. He therefore willingly agreed to extend his visit a few days in order to gratify Bentley, by taking a particular view of his improvements. This however he found no easy task, for Bentley had so many friends who did him the honour of taking their breakfast, luncheon, or dinner with him, that the greatest part

of the four days Eveleigh had consented to remain was passed in the enjoyments of the table.

The fifth day of his visit was Sunday, and the morning proved wet. Eveleigh rose at his usual hour, but contrary to what he had experienced in the previous mornings, when the opening of doors and windows indicated all were upon the alert, all was now silent. "It is a day of rest," thought Eveleigh, "but was never designed for indolence."

At length the distant sound of the village church bell was heard borne on the breeze, and as Eveleigh opened the window to hear the chime, which always conveyed a cheering emotion to his heart, the clouds broke away before the luminary of day, whose strong golden ray tinged them with fleecy brightness.

Seeing it had ceased raining, Eveleigh descended to the garden, which now might literally be said to send up sweet odours to the skies, while the soft note of the red-

breast seemed to join the general hymn of nature. No one yet appeared in the house, and Eveleigh had enjoyed a long, and to him a delightfully contemplative walk in the grounds, when he perceived Bentley in his morning robe on the viranda. Eveleigh immediately joined him, for the hour usual for morning service was fast approaching. "Are you not going to church this morning?" he enquired, as he entered the breakfast-room. "Church, no indeed," replied Bentley, "not while that rascal Wilmot remains, a fellow who is never content; would you believe that he has doubled his living by the tythes, and yet there is not a labourer in the parish who would not serve him for nothing, he has so much art. Eveleigh guessed at the nature of the art made use of, but made no remark; he merely observed, that it was greatly to be regretted that those privileges which the law gave to the clergy should either be abused, or interfere with

those higher interests which the pastor and his flock should never lose sight of, and were equally concerned in. "Well, we have contrived to torment him, however, and I think have succeeded," replied Bentley, in a tone of exultation, evading the drift of Eveleigh's remark, "we have made him take every thing in kind, and a rare trouble he has had. All he says, however, is, that he shall patiently abide the return of our better reason, and our justice, for he is perfectly conscious of requiring only his just due. It is a curious thing, you will allow, for a man thus to pronounce on the justice of his own cause; he will not so easily convince us, however."—"And are you determined to absent yourself from the public service on this account alone?"

"And is not the reason sufficient?" retorted Bentley, with some acrimony; "who do you think can have the patience to sit and hear a man preaching of moderation, humility, and honesty, while he is picking



the pockets of his neighbours, and buying the good will of the poor, by robbing, I may say, the rich?"

Eveleigh was not sorry that the entrance of Mrs. Bentley put an end to a conversation upon a subject, the merits of which he was unacquainted with, and mentally regretting that he had lost the opportunity of attending the service; he changed the conversation to indifferent subjects, and when breakfast was concluded, said, he would resume his stroll, Bentley saying he was rather engaged with a person he appointed to meet him respecting the purchase of some timber.

"Ah!" thought Eveleigh, "had not calamity reached me, I perhaps had given my heart in the same manner to the world and its cares! O merciful God! make thine inflictions, grievous though they be to my frailty, conducive to the improvement of my moral being; and while I enjoy thy gifts, let me remember how tran-

sient they may be, and ever be ready to resign them at thy behest."

Such was the silent ejaculation of Eveleigh as he rose from the breakfast table: and telling Bentley he would resume his walk, as the morning was so inviting, he left the apartment, glad to enjoy—

"Communion sweet, communion large and high,  
His reason, guardian angel, and his God!"

By the time he had reached the termination of the grounds to ascend a gently rising acclivity leading to some rich corn fields, now tawny with the ripening grain, the sound of the church bell announced the conclusion of the service, and he soon descried the building itself rising, amidst some fine old chesnuts, whose rich foliage partially embrowned, well contrasted with the simple whiteness of the sacred edifice with its modest spire. Eveleigh bent his course towards it, for he was fond of church-yard contemplations, and he was not

unbiassed in his choice by curiosity to see the pastor who had formed the subject of Bentley's asperity.

As he approached, he perceived that the white part of the building which had attracted his notice was a late addition to the edifice, which was highly interesting from its commanding situation, its picturesque form, and its hoary antiquity.

To remedy, as well as possible, the incongruity of the recent erection, a creeper had been planted which had already covered a great portion of the buttresses. This sacred edifice stood upon the brow of a considerable eminence, embosomed as we have described in the shades of some fine old chesnut-trees. It appeared to have received many additions from the period of its erection; part of the wall was of immense thickness, and of very ancient date. A portion also was formed of wood, and the steeple was entirely of that material, as were many of the rustic monuments in the church-yard. Rude and uncouth as



was the mingled architecture of this little church and its adjoining burial ground, it appeared invested with a melancholy interest in the eyes of the reflective Eveleigh. There was a calmness, a repose, and a venerable expression about it, which carried his mind back to those primitive times when it first became the house of prayer, and which irresistibly led him to reflect on the vicissitudes of sublunary things, and the mutable nature of man.

Reflections of this nature are attended with a touching melancholy, which is as pleasing as salutary to the soul.

As Eveleigh walked among the rude memorials of those who slept beneath the bright green sod of the burying-ground, and recollected that not a trace perhaps now remained on earth of so many generations ; and then averted his eye from the grave furrowed spot, to the lovely country spread before him as green and as blooming as ever, his heart felt the full influence of the most affecting of all contrasts.

“ Thus man and his marvels melt away,” he mentally said, “ while nature returning annually into new life, bears no traces of decrepitude and decay. How sweet and pathetic the lesson! Let not man presume, for he withereth like the green herb, and his place shall know him no more; neither let man despair, for the flower that faded on earth shall bloom anew in Paradise, never to fade again.”

While thus indulging his usual habit of moralizing, Eveleigh was roused from his reverie by the sound of no light step, and raising his eyes from an uncouth tomb, the inscription of which he was endeavouring to decypher, he saw an old peasant coming up the neatly gravelled path. He leaned on a stout stick with one hand, and a crutch supported the other side, one leg being apparently entirely incapable of motion; his countenance, however, was hale and cheerful, a few silver locks appeared from beneath his large slouched hat, and every part of his dress exhibited a clean-

liness and care which gave a favourable impression of healthfulness and an attention to the proprieties of the Sabbath.

“ Good day, master,” said the old man, as he approached Eveleigh in a tone of unrefined courtesy ; “ there’s many an aching heart lies quiet below here.—Did you hear our good minister this morning ?” Eveleigh answered in the negative. “ Well, the more’s the pity, for he does know how to comfort and to teach ; he has made a mort of difference in this parish since he came among us. Why, bless ye, we used almost to have nobody at church in the morning hardly : one went to his farm, another to his merchandize ; and as to Will Rattle, at the Green Dragon, he says Parson Wilmot is the greatest enemy he ever had, for he has taken all his customers away, of a Sunday in particular.”

“ Has Mr. Wilmot been long here ?” enquired Eveleigh.

“ I count about a year and a half,” replied the old man ; “ why, it was he that

made all this alteration in the church and church-yard; before he came, you could hardly see the graves, the grass was so high, and there was as many paths as fancies of those who made them; the gates were never shut, and the donkeys tore every thing to pieces. But would you think it, master," added the old man, poising himself on his stick, "that the gentlefolks don't like Mr. Wilmot: they say he is *officious*, I think they call it, whereby I count they mean busy, and busy he certainly is in making every body comfortable; and he tells them that nobody can be comfortable unless they are good, and so he does all he can to make them so by teaching and preaching, and what's more, by shewing us an example, for if ever there was a good man, he is one. The gentry don't like him, because he raised the tythes too high they say; I don't understand it, but I think he would not take more than his due, and the Bible tells us the labourer is worthy of his hire."

How long the garrulous old man would have continued his harangue is uncertain, had not a little boy, much resembling him in features, called lustily from the garden of a small cottage situated about a stone's throw from the church, "Grandfather, you must come to dinner, mother says."

The summons appeared a welcome one to the old man, who bidding Eveleigh good day, hobbled off with a rapidity which proved the power of habit to reconcile us to the greatest physical inconveniences. Eveleigh would gladly have remained on the spot till the afternoon service, but had been informed by Mrs. Bentley that they dined at an earlier hour than usual, in consequence of some domestic arrangement; and as he intended to quit Prospect Lodge in the evening, he thought it would be rude not to appear at dinner. He bent his steps towards the villa, ruminating in his mind the different accounts he had received of Mr. Wilmot, and regretting that the pal-



try interests of money should close the eyes of any one to the substantial merit of his fellow-man. He determined to seek the acquaintance of Wilmot when he should become settled at his new abode, which he intended to make his residence during a part of the year. He arrived in the eating-room of the villa just in time for the early meal, which, much to his surprise, was not attended by any guest.

“Well, Eveleigh,” said Bentley, as he entered, “I thought, my good fellow, you had given us the slip. Why, where have you been wandering—botanizing, hey?” and he looked archly at his wife. “Have you found the stray plants?”—“How can you be so ridiculous, George,” observed Mrs. Bentley; “but it is only because you know nothing of it yourself that you laugh at botanical science.”

Eveleigh changed the subject, by saying whither he had strolled, some remarks of not a very liberal nature followed, which he quickly dispelled by adverting to his in-

tended ride in the evening. "Are you then determined to leave us?" enquired Bentley. "I must indeed do so this evening, but so few miles will separate us, that I may perhaps become a very troublesome visitor for the future." This remark of Eveleigh occasioned some very cordial assurances on the part of his host and hostess: "Well, as you are resolved to go," said Bentley, "I shall ride with you as far as my fir plantation, which I want you to see. If the speculation answers, it will be a mine of wealth to me; you never saw finer plants in your life, Eveleigh; I am the only one who has ventured to introduce them here, and, in truth, I have been obliged to sink a good deal upon the spec, "but nothing venture, nothing have," that is my motto. But really, Eveleigh, if I part with you this evening, you must positively engage to come, and bring down a few partridges with me. My farm is a fine cover for game, and you have seen my dogs—are they not famous?"

It was by no means necessary for Eveleigh to answer these several queries, for Bentley, profoundly absorbed in self, would not have heard a word. When, therefore, he concluded, as it would appear for want of breath, his auditor merely replied, that in the shooting season he should be happy to make his engagements, should he then be in the country. The hour now approached when it was necessary to commence their evening ride: it was one of that glorious appearing which seems to connect the soul with heaven, while it hurries the mind to by-past-years and entenders every feeling. The day had been lovely, but it turned even more so in its close; the west glowed like a ruby, shedding its bright radiance on the beautiful scenery, colours of super-human tint variegated the sky, each softening into each, from the richest crimson to the pale topaz edged with silver. The eye of Eveleigh feasted on the picture, and his heart felt its



influence, although the egotism of his companion greatly interrupted his meditation.

The autumn was the favourite season of Eveleigh, although it saddened his spirit : it was fraught with recollections and associations arising from the warm affections, glowing enjoyments, and tender connections of youth, those shadows of departed delights that supply to man the substance he too rashly deemed secure. Eveleigh and his companion entered a romantic dell, through which a strong ray of the declining sun poured a stream of golden light, reflected with dazzling brilliance by the casements of a cottage apparently of the humblest kind, but every part about it plainly exhibiting the hand of industry. A large piece of ground was regularly laid out with vegetables, no noxious weeds were seen to obstruct the growth of the culinary store, but all seemed healthful and flourishing through judicious care.

On a green in front of this cottage, seat-

ed on two rough pieces of timber top, the master of the little dwelling appeared, surrounded by seven half-naked, but perfectly clean children. Scanty as their clothes were, they yet were perfectly whole; and although the garments of the cottager himself were of the coarsest material, and in every instance exhibited a similar extreme poverty, they also, like the habiliments of the children, were perfectly clean and whole. The groupe was interesting to the kind-hearted Eveleigh: the man bore on each knee a sturdy little urchin, whose rosy cheeks and sparkling eyes might have made them models for young bacchantes. A little girl had climbed up behind her father, and was trying with her little fat hand to turn his face towards her, that she might kiss it, her own being half shaded with a profusion of bright brown ringlets. Stretched on the ground at a short distance were two other boys, and a cur, who seemed too happy in being pulled about to notice the travellers: one of these boys Eveleigh

recognized to be the child who had had the care of Bentley's dogs. Two other children made up this family groupe, a boy and girl, so exactly resembling each other in feature and form, that Eveleigh concluded they were twins. They were too beautiful, and their employment was too interesting not to arrest the attention. Hair of silky softness and pale brown colour, eyes of the deepest blue, and complexion fair as if brought up in the abode of luxury, they seemed like two fair angels descended from the glorious sky beneath the brilliant canopy of which they sat.

It was upon the grass they were seated, an arm of each was passed round the form of the other, while the girl held in her hand a small book, in such a position that her companion could study it as well as herself; and they both seemed so much engaged, that the approach of Eveleigh and Bentley was unheeded. As they came near, however, to the peasant, he disengaged himself as quickly as possible from

his endearing incumbrances, and rose to answer the greeting of Bentley.

“What, Burton, are all these brats your’s?”—“Yes, your honour, here is seven of them.”—“What, have you nine?”—“Only two more, your honour: Harry, who is cow boy at Mr. Mansel’s, and a little one just born, as I may say.”—“How do you contrive to feed them all, hey?”—“Why, your honour, what with my bit of ground, and some skim milk from Mr. Mansel’s, and now an tan a little bit of pork he gies me, we manage tolerable, when my missis is about; but when she is laid aside, and I cannot get work, why, your honour, I sometimes am afraid I must go to the parish, and that well nigh breaks my heart and my poor wife’s too.”—“Why don’t you send that boy Bill to Hardy, he might have threepence a-day.”—“I should be glad to do so, thank your honour,” replied the cottager, while his ruddy cheek became deepened in colour as he spoke, and something like an indignant expression

fired his dark eye ; “ but, to tell you the honest truth, Mr. Hardy has not used the boy well.—Here, Bill, why don’t you get up, and pay your obedience to the Squire ?” Bill obeyed the mandate, and coming directly before Bentley, bowed his head and scraped his foot with due form, and then stood, silent and upright, till his father told him he might go, and not stand there like a nonce.

“ Well,” said Bentley, “ but how has Hardy not used the boy well ; if he does wrong, he must be corrected ?”—“ I’ll tell you how it was, your honour : Master Hardy desired the boy to feed the dogs with some boiled mutton which had been cooked for them ; the boy was very hungry, and the meat tempting, he ventured to take a little piece of it, and Mr. Hardy returned while he was eating it. He was exceeding angry, called Bill a good-for-nothing thief, beat him very sore with his hunting whip, bidding him go home like a beggar’s brat as he was, and never dare to



show his face in the yard again, swearing very much indeed in his passion. Now, your honour, I know Bill deserved to be beat for taking what was not his own, though he was ever so hungry, but he is not a beggar's brat, you know; but I would sooner be a beggar and a pauper too, your honour, than let my boy remain where he may learn to blaspheme, and take the name of God in vain. I hope, therefore, your honour, you wont be angry at my not sending him to Mr. Hardy."

Eveleigh, who had marked with regret that Bentley was by no means exempt from the vice thus boldly protested against by Burton, saw his colour heighten, and was not sorry that his presence possibly might check the ebullition of anger the frankness of the cottager might have created.

"How do you think your boys will ever get employ, if you have such methodist notions; you know Hardy means nothing when he swears, and his passion is over in a minute, he is the best-natured fellow in

the world.”—“ Mayhap he is, your honour ; but, indeed, I can’t let my boy be sworeed at—how can I teach him not to take God’s name in vain, as I do when he says his catechism of a Sunday evening, and yet run him into the way of hearing it every week day ; that you know, your honour, would be a great sin.”—“ Well, well,” said Bentley impatiently, “ let us have no more preaching ; I will speak to Hardy about beating the boy : he should not have done that if the poor rascal was hungry.” Saying this, he was turning his horse to the road, when he suddenly stopped, and enquired, “ Are you at work at Mansel’s now ? ”—“ No, your honour ; times go so hard with him, since his brother broke so much in his debt, that he was obliged to discharge me and Ben Fallow. ’Tis a sad thing for me now my wife is so bad, for Master Mansel was a good master as far as he could.”—“ Is your wife ill, then ; I think she is always ailing ? ”—“ Oh yes, your honour ; she is

sadly out now indeed, since she got that there cold in the flood last April. The doctor says, he can't do her no good; I am sometimes afeard I shall lose her, and she has been a good wife to me, that she has." A tear stood in the eye of Burton as he uttered this simple tribute to the goodness of his wife, but his native delicacy and independence were too great for him to hint that the doctor had recommended a generous diet and some good port wine as the most efficacious medicine for his poor patient; and Bentley was too thoughtless and too much absorbed in self to consider that the diseases of the poor yield more readily to such a mode of treatment than to any other prescribed remedies, especially when the mind is cheered by their being voluntarily and kindly offered.

"I suppose, then, you would be glad of a job," he enquired. "Why yes, your honour, that to be sure I should."—"Well, that Five Acre field, by the fir



plantation, I want to have ploughed ; will you undertake it ?"—“ Gladly, your honour ;—when do you wish to have it done ? ”—“ You may begin it to-morrow, if you will ; but mind ye, I shall give you only what Mansel did, for you fellows horridly impose upon me, because you think I have money.”—“ Very well, your honour ; but you know Mr. Mansel is a poor man, and his farm is very light land.”—“ And I suppose you were going to say I am a rich one, and my farm is heavy land ? ” interrupted Bentley. “ Yes, your honour, I can’t but say I was, and so I hoped you would give me a little more. That field is stiff stony soil : I have heard my father say, the stones lay as thick in it as a wall, and you may as well plough through a brick fence almost.”—“ Well, I stand to my bargain, take it or not, as you please,” rejoined Bentley. “ Very well, your honour, I’m obliged to ye ; I’ll plough it to be sure, and I hope, if I do it to your mind, that you will consider me and my poor

wife, and that we never have been beholden to the parish.”—“ Well, well, we shall see about all that : come up to Hardy to-morrow morning, I will mention it to him to-night.”

As Bentley uttered these words, he turned his horse's head, and without deigning any sort of farewell to the cottager, proceeded into the road, apparently forgetting he had a companion. Eveleigh only waited to slip a sovereign down the back of the little studious girl ; and while she shrunk, and exclaimed, “ Something is cold on my back,” he uttered an affable “ good evening ” to Burton, and rode off, pleasing himself with the surprise the discovery would occasion to the family party. It did indeed surprise, and though it was evidently intended as a free gift, Burton and his wife were equally scrupulous in appropriating it : it was therefore laid by, until an opportunity offered of ascertaining from the donor that it was really intended for them.

When Eveleigh rejoined Bentley after this little delay, the latter observed, "That fellow Burton is the best ploughman in the county, nay, in the country, I might perhaps say. I am glad I met with him to plough that heavy stone piece, for it is, as he says, like a wall."—"Why, then, did you hesitate to pay him what he seemed to think but a fair price for his labour?"—"Oh, as to that, they always want more than they get;—why, my good fellow, if we were to give our labourers what they think their labours are worth, we should soon have them our masters. They are insolent enough as it is, but if we were to yield to all they want, we might soon let our farms, and bring our hogs, as the saying is, to a fine market.—But see, there rises my plantation, there is a picture for you!" It was indeed a beautiful picture: the plantation was on a sloping ridge of considerable extent and depth, receiving the whole radiance of the now fast declining orb of day, whose strong rays marked

distinctly every tree by its long shadow, while the dark foliage was partially illuminated as the golden beams penetrated to the very recesses of the plantation; not a feeble or a withered tree appeared, but all seemed to bid fair to realize the wealthy dream of the speculative possessor. Having examined and admired this nursery of sylvan beauty, the friends parted—Eveleigh to pursue his way to Westwood Grange, and Bentley to return to Prospect Lodge, which he declared to Eveleigh, if he did not very often visit, he should suppose he wished to cut acquaintance with his old schoolfellow.

We now attend Eveleigh pursuing his contemplative ride.

“How numerous,” thought he, as he rode gently on, “are the opportunities for the exercise of my active virtues, which present themselves in the situation I am now going, by the providence of God, to fill. I hope to be placed among a simple and a humble people; and if so, how many

blessings may I have power to diffuse by the common offices of kindness and social duty.

“ If the young are wandering into error or folly, my advice may restrain, my experience may warn. If misfortune presses hard upon the poor man, and his earthly prospect is clouded and dark, my pity may soothe, my prompt assistance may raise him, and rekindle the energy which calamity had weakened; and if the bended form of the decayed and aged labourer excites my compassion, and his grey hairs my reverence, how pleasing will it be to prove the sincerity of my feelings by giving him a quiet shelter in some sequestered corner of my little domain, where he may descend to the grave in peace.

But above all, what happiness may I diffuse by citing my own experience, to prove to my dependents the value of religion, that only possession which can confer real peace to the heart of man. How necessary is this master-spring of human



happiness and human virtue to all; but more especially, how indispensable to the poor! No where, experience and observation have convinced me, we have a more striking evidence of the value of it than in the abodes of poverty, for in the hopes which it brings, the poor find the mighty compensation for all the privations they feel, all the inequalities they experience, all the toils they undergo. It is there I have seen the divine principle in all its sweet simplicity and holy energy, cheering the drooping soul, ennobling the character, and infusing a peace which passeth understanding amidst the direst calamities of poverty, sickness, and death. I have also learnt to estimate the value of religious principle in the abodes of poverty, by witnessing the misery of its absence. I have been called to contemplate the wretchedness of privation, unattended by any sense of divine aid, any feeling of divine love, any awe of divine justice: and my heart

has bled at the view, and yearned to arouse from their apathy the unthinking wretches."

Such was the train of thought which passed through the mind of the meditative Eveleigh. It was the hour sacred to tender musing, when the soul looks in upon herself, and the world and its vanities appear as they really are, dreams and illusions. "The first stars had met, and twilight had walked abroad," while in the vales the pale moon called up her shadowy shapes to soothe the fanciful and the pensive mind. Eveleigh felt the tranquilizing influence of the hour. A sweet serenity pervaded his soul; and though images of the past mingled with every thought, his spirit seemed to soar to that high future, from which the past would be regarded in its true light as the dream of a moment, the vestibule to the temple of everlasting joy.

As he had given notice of his arrival, he found every thing prepared for him in his



new residence, where we now quit him to put his benevolent plans in execution, and return to our skilful ploughman, Harry Burton.

He was punctual to his engagement at Prospect Lodge; and though he found Hardy, the tyrannical looker of Bentley, sullen, and apparently unwilling to employ him, it appeared his orders had been so peremptory, that Burton was supplied with the necessary horses and implements.

He found his task a most laborious one, as the field had once been the scite of some buildings of very ancient date, and had never yet been sufficiently cultivated to remove portions of the decayed walls, &c. In prosecuting his work, Burton perceived a shining substance upturned by the plow-share; he took it up, and perceived it was a piece of black looking metal, a part of it only being bright, as if the share had cut it from a larger portion of the same substance. He thought it was very heavy for the size of the piece, and put it in his pocket

with the intention of showing it to Joe Anvil, the blacksmith, when he happened to see him.

It remained nearly unthought of until he had completed his job, for which he received the stipulated sum, that is, what he would have obtained from the *poor* Mr. Mansel.

Burton was too much pressed down with poverty to contend the matter with Mr. Hardy, who was the paymaster.

When he had got his hard-earned stipend, he determined to buy his sick wife a little piece of meat, and set off to the market-town, about four miles distance, for that purpose.

In his way he passed the shop of Joe Anvil, the blacksmith, and he resolved to call and ask him to look at the piece of metal. "Ah, Burton, "how are ye, my lad," said the kind-hearted Joe, while he washed his brawny arms in the quenching water at the forge, "Why, you look thin, my boy; those brats of yours make a

great hole in a peck loaf, I warrant ye ; and how is Nancy ? My wife says as how she is a poor cretur."

"She is indeed," replied Burton ; " I am going to get her a bit o' meat, for she seems to linger for it, as one may say."—

"Well, but you must walk in the house a bit first," replied the blacksmith ; " my missis and I are just going to take a sup of tea, and she will be most glad to see you."

—"Thank ye heartily, I will step in a bit, becuse as how I ha got something to show ye," rejoined Burton. " I have had luckily a job of ploughing for Squire Bentley."—

"Squire Bentley, indeed !" replied Anvil, as he entered his neatly sanded house, and bid Burton sit down in the armed chair.

"Squire Bentley, indeed ! I warrant then ye was not overpaid ; he is such a mean hound, he had better feed the poor, than that parcel o' dogs and lazy sarvants as he keeps. His poor old father and mother little thought he would turn out such a hardhearted ninny : they had some natu-

rality in them. Not that the Squire hoards up his money, but then only think what a parcel of varmint he spends it on. There's that fellow Hardy, a greater rascal never walked the earth."—" I wish you would keep your foolish tongue quiet; you never care who you affront, not you."—" Why, wife, you know what I say is as true as gospel, and we are all friends here," looking at Burton, at the same time offering him a jug of foaming beer, while his *prudent missis* stirred up the fire to make the kettle boil. " But I will say it, that I have not a bar of iron in my shop that's harder than the Squire's heart; it wants, I warrant ye, " the furnace of affliction," as the parson says, to mollify and soften it."—" Well, that is true enough, Joe," observed the convinced dame, as holding a huge earthen teapot very high, she filled her cups with the fragrant beverage; " and he may hap yet to be put in it; for, as the saying is, he is born, but not dead yet."—" Ah, things are managed in another guess

way to what they were when the old folks lived at Lavender Hall," resumed Anvil; "then, when we went to do any job, a body was axed into the kitchen, and Madam herself, mayhap, would ax one to go to the warm seat by the great fire on the hearth, and would order (when it was winter) some nice hot elder wine and a toast, or a mug of brown stout with a drop of good hollands in it; and then Madam would be so familiar like, and ax ye about your family, and how times went on, and such like. But now, if mayhap one goes, if one is axed into the kitchen there ye may stand, for a deuce a bit will any of the fine slimmerkins say, "Will you sit down, Master Anvil, or will ye go to the fire; but they look and jeer, just as if one was'nt the same flesh and blood like. I remember when I used to go there how comfortable I used to think the large kitchen, perhaps two or three spits going at once before a great wood fire, and the huge boiler hung over it, and the bright brass



skillets standing about ; but now, bless ye, there is a fine *patent* grate, as they call it, comed from Lunnun, and the Lunnuner comed to set it a going ; and round the kitchen are great iron plates with stoves underneath to heat them, and they put the saucepans upon them, and things are cooked without *cracking* the saucepans, because I suppose the fine finnerkin misses should not dirty their hands in somebling them, forsooth. And now young madam never goes into the kitchen, but there is a houskeeper very smart kept, and she pinches the servants, to curry favour with her master and missis ; so there is sad quarrelling amongst them all."

How long this edifying conversation might have continued is uncertain, had not Burton interrupted it, and turned it into a new channel by producing the piece of metal ; asking Anvil if he could tell him the worth of it. Anvil put down his massy piece of bread and butter which he had just cut off a large home-baked loaf, and

took it to the window, weighed it in his brawny hand, not much whitened by the ablution it had received. "It is a queer looking thing," he observed, turning it round and round, touching it with his tongue, and passing a small file over it. "It looks almost like a horn in shape, but it is too heavy for that." After much examination, in which his wife bore a part, it was pronounced a bit of bell metal or brass, worth a few pence, or mayhap a shilling if he took it to Mr. Fitzhaye, the silversmith, at C., who would be sure to give the value for it, because if there was an honest gentleman living, it was he. Anxious to obtain the meat his wife was lingering for, Burton took his leave of his hearty friends, and proceeded to town. His first business was to obtain a neck of mutton and a few little cakes, to which he longed to add a pint of wine; but Prudence said no. "Well," thought he, "if I do get a shilling for this bit of brass, I can take a sup of brandy for her, poor thing, that



will do her good, I dare say." With this hope he entered the shop of Mr. Fitzhaye, not without some agitation, for the finest feelings throbbed in the breast of the affectionate husband. Anvil had been right in directing him to Fitzhaye, who was indeed that noblest work of God, an honest man. Possessed of a mind very far elevated above the generality of young men of his class, it was his study to enlarge its capacities, and to cultivate its energies.

From earliest childhood, in fact, Charles Fitzhaye knew not what it was to be idle, every moment had its employment, variety formed its relaxation. To all the acquirements of industry were added that feeling and sympathy for others which flows from enlarged and liberal ideas, and never was he so happy as when he made others so by acts of kindness and good will. In every transaction of business, it was easy to see how entirely he was divested of a mercenary and calculating spirit.

Ardent in the pursuit of knowledge, and

aiming to excel in every pursuit to which he directed his attention, he not only possessed an accurate acquaintance with the practical part of his trade, and was competent to the performance of its mechanical minutiae, but his theoretical knowledge of its various branches was correct and extensive. A native loftiness of mind, remote from pride, led him to disclaim any distinctions but those of real merit and moral worth and usefulness; hence his attentions to his poor customers were, if possible, greater than those given to the wealthier; for he was wont to say, the sixpence of the poor man was more valuable to him than the pound of the affluent, and his time is his principal possession, upon which I have no right to draw, by keeping him waiting.

Fitzhaye was alone when Burton entered his shop, which was a very elegant one, the work of his ingenuity, industry, and taste, in the hours of relaxation from the active routine of his business. Burton

leisurely set down his market-basket, took off his hat, which he laid on a chair standing by the counter, set his large stick in the corner by it, stroked down his hair, and then raising his clean smock frock, felt to the very bottom of his pocket for the piece of metal, which he slowly drew forth, and reaching it out at his full arm's length to Fitzhaye over the counter, which he seemed afraid to approach. "They tell me, Sir, you buys bits of silver and sich, and that you gies the *waler* for un. Is that bit worth any thing, think ye?" Fitzhaye took it from him, and in a moment found by its appearance and weight, that it was pure gold. He put it in the scales, and found it weighed more than three ounces. "And what do you expect for this, my friend?" he said to his customer, hardly able to conceal the pleasure he felt that the poor man had not taken it any one who would have availed themselves of his ignorance and simplicity. "Why, Sir, I thought mayhap it mought fetch me

a shilling or so, as I have a poor sick wife and large family, and times are so hard, and work is scarce.”—“ You will be glad, then, if I give you two guineas for it ?”—“ Two guineas, sir, aye, that I should ; but you don’t mean so, sir, I think you are joking, may hap ?” for a smile illuminated the expressive countenance of Fitzhaye. Again it was put in the scale, to give him time to announce the good fortune to poor Burton. “ No, my good fellow, I am not joking, I assure you ; I have the pleasure to tell you I will give you ten pounds for it.” Cautiously as he announced this joyful intelligence, it nearly overcame the poor labourer : he trembled violently, his colour went and came, his knees shook, and in a faltering manner he said, “ I must sit down, if you please, sir,” and dropped, half fainting, on the chair, while the large drops of agitation and overwrought feelings of joy stood on his forehead, and the pure tear of gratitude started into his eyes. “ Thank God,” he whis-

pered, " my poor Nancy." The emotion of Fitzhaye was little inferior to that of the poor man, who, ground down with poverty, regarded ten pounds as an absolute mine of wealth, and carefully enveloping in many papers the notes, and placing them in a safe and remote corner of his pocket, he quitted the shop, repeating many times, " I'm obliged to you, sir, very much obliged to you indeed."

Eager to communicate the glad tidings to his Nancy, he took a short way over the fields, intending to inform his friend Anvil on the morrow of the joyful event, and alike forgetting wine and brandy. He entered his poor but clean dwelling. The poor invalid was raised in her bed by pillows, a friendly neighbour having rendered her the salutary service. Her form was emaciated to the appearance of a skeleton; her countenance pale and anxious, excepting two bright spots of clearest rose upon either cheek, marking the intensity of the fever which consumed her. In a scarcely audi-



ble whisper, while her sunk eye brightened with a ray of momentary pleasure, she said to her husband as he entered, "Ah, Harry love, I am glad you are come, for I have been thinking how I should like a little mutton broth with a turnip in it."—"Well, Nancy dear, here it is; if neighbour Elby will put on a little bit, you may soon have it, and some every day till you are tired of it."—"Ah, Harry, we are not like to tire with meat, boy; but please God I do but get about, I don't mind that."

Burton did not know what to do about telling his good fortune, for it had had such an effect upon himself, he dreaded the surprise upon the weak frame of his wife; and after much internal debate, he concluded not to inform her of it till she was a little better, but leave her to conjecture how he procured her those restoratives he was resolved she should have, now Providence had so wonderfully put it in his power.

The casement of the room was open, but half obscured by the curtain; not a breath

of air seemed to reach the poor object upon the bed, although a strong ray of the declining sun pierced through the flimsy yellow curtains drawn partially to shade the invalid, the external scene was finely contrasted with the internal one of poverty, distress, and disease. The sun was setting in most glorious splendour, his orb, like a golden sphere, appeared on the summit of a rich purple cloud spreading its mantle the whole extent of the western horizon, while the landscape was illuminated with the parting glory.

Burton summoned his children around him, and having given them each a piece of bread and an onion for their supper, they all knelt down, and he repeated a short but fervent prayer. The young ones, accustomed to assist themselves, then each retired to their repose upon clean straw beds placed in a room apart from their sick mother, to whom they severally gave the kiss of affection. The little piece of mutton now made its appearance, but the



capricious appetite of the poor invalid had passed away, and turning pale, she rejected the very smell of it ; yet, unwilling to vex her husband who had brought it to her, she tried to taste it. The effort, however, was vain. " I am not hungry now, Harry," she said faintly, " it will make you a nice supper : it will do me good to see *you* eat it. I will take one of those nice little cakes, and have a piece of mutton to-morrow."—" Try, my jewel, and eat a piece," said the kind-hearted neighbour Elby. The poor invalid shook her head, and pressed the hand of her humble friend. The action was expressive, and understood by the person who was well acquainted with the symptoms of suffering. " Well," she said, " perhaps it is as well ; to-morrow we shall see you better, and ready to eat without being asked." Burton's evident appetite seemed, as she said it would, to do her good : she was able to remain raised in her bed, while he read several chapters from the Sacred Volume, and

united with him in rendering thanks for the blessings they enjoyed, in supplications for those they desired, and happy in the affection of each other, they committed themselves to the protection of the Friend of the friendless, the Parent of the poor. The repose, which poverty and distress had scarcely power to interrupt, was broken by joy and thankfulness; Burton had a secret in his keeping which his wife did not share, and it was unquiet in his breast. His sleep was hurried, and he muttered something about guineas, and Anvil, and Bentley ploughing. Never having known him thus disturbed, his nervous wife became alarmed, and at length roused poor Burton from his golden dream. Half awake, he hardly understood the drift of her enquiries, and with his mind filled with the subject, in a very incoherent manner he divulged the secret.

His wife was confirmed in her fears that his head was unsettled, for the story seemed too improbable to be true. "Harry dear,"

said she, "you arn't well to be sure, you got hot last night, and the fever makes you light-headed."—"Yes, Nancy, I am quite well, but indeed I was so lucky as to find the piece of gold, and I have got ten bank notes in my pocket for it, which Mr. Fitzhaye gave me; as soon as it is light I will shew them to you."—"Well, God is a merciful God," exclaimed the trembling woman. "O Harry, let us thank Him; well, now we can pay our rent, and give good neighbour Elby too a trifle for what she has done for me, for many a kind turn she has done for me since I have been so weak."

No sooner had the crowing of the cock proclaimed the return of day, when Burton convinced his half doubting, impatient partner, that his acquisition was no dream. A few salutary tears accompanied her ejaculation of thankfulness, and joining fervently in her husband's morning orisons, he bid her compose herself to sleep till he returned to breakfast, and proceeded to

a renewal of those labours, in the execution of which his heart was happy, his family assisted, and his Creator worshipped by the performance of duties he had assigned him.

We leave these simple cottagers to the enjoyment of feelings so pure and genuine, to return to the purchaser of the prize. When Burton quitted the shop of Fitzhaye, he more scrupulously and closely examined his purchase, not to ascertain its value, for of that he was sure, but to find out what it could have been. Well acquainted with the antiquities of his native town, and the vicinity, which had once been a very considerable Roman station, he was led to infer that the piece had been severed from a mass by a sharp instrument.

Charles Fitzhaye possessed that laudable spirit of discovery which urges a man on in every pursuit of an intellectual or scientific nature, and till he had brought the conclusions of his mind to some degree of probability, he was restless and absent.

After passing a watchful night, a thoughtful morning, and a conjecturing day, and by his absence exciting some surprise in those who generally saw his whole mind engaged in his immediate employment, he concluded there must be a massive something which belonged to the piece which formed no whole of itself, and that it must have been severed by the ploughshare. He could not but acknowledge to himself that the mass must be large, and very strongly embedded, to have resisted the united force of two horses and the bluntness of the share; but still he would not condemn his own hypothesis, when he recollected the ductility of pure gold, the force of the plough, the principle of the share cutting, (as a guillotine,) the wall of earth on the left of the share, and its velocity. What further induced him to think it was cut by the ploughshare was, that the piece was black, excepting the end which was very bright, and as if recently cut. That the gold was of no modern date was



evident: its solidity, its purity, and its shape, equally indicated its antiquity; and again Charles Fitzhaye repeated to himself, "As it makes no whole of itself, it was evidently attached to something else, and which I have no doubt remains in the field where this came from." After having thus concluded in his own mind that it was separated from something by the ploughshare, Fitzhaye at once resolved to pursue the discovery; but to do this, the concurrence of the owner of the field was necessary, and to obtain his security that there should be a participation of the treasure expected to be found. With this view Fitzhaye made the necessary inquiries, and found that Bentley owned the field, but was from home, leaving however Mr. Hardy fully authorized to transact any business which might occur. As no time was to be lost, Fitzhaye waited upon this representative of the Squire at his snug little farm on the Prospect Lodge estate; and ascertaining that he, in all things relating to



the business of it, " stood in Bentley's shoes," Fitzhaye told him he had something to communicate which might possibly be of advantage to him, but none could discover it but himself, and if he would enter into an agreement that they should be equal sharers in that advantage, he would divulge the affair. Fitzhaye struck the right chord of Hardy's mercenary heart, the anticipations of gain for a moment relaxed the severity of his features, the expression of which was in direct contrast with the open and generous candour which marked those of Fitzhaye.

Hardy had apparently passed his climactic some years, his aspect was healthy and florid, and his hair, originally black, was considerably mingled with grey about his temples. His nose was large, and somewhat inclined to the aquiline, parting two small gray eyes which seemed to twinkle with asperity and suspicion, and to emit the rays of discord, meanness, and ill-humour. Fitzhaye had been introduced

to this representative of the dashing young squire in a small room, not very fragrant with the fumes of the tobacco which had been probably smoked on the preceding evening. The apartment appeared the chosen sanctuary of its master, for it bore evidences on every side of his peculiar pursuits ; and on the entrance of Fitzhaye, he was deeply engaged at an old bureau in making up some accounts, many heaps of paper littering the floor and a table near him, while three fine dogs lay stretched in the rays of the sun, facing a large casement window overlooking a spacious stone yard, in which were abundance of poultry, a quantity of dairy utensils, and every indication of a profitable farm. Two boys, and a stout healthy dairy maid, were busily employed in scrubbing the churns, butter stands, and all the essentials of the dairy.

Hardy and Fitzhaye were not unknown to each other, from the intercourse of trade ; and having bid his visitor take a seat, after the not very welcome salutation

of the dogs at his entrance had ceased, and heard the opening of his business, during which he kept nodding his head, he threw himself back in his smoking chair, and raising his spectacles on his forehead, pulling up his boots, and drawing out his watch to see how time went, he regarded Fitzhaye with a penetrating look, as if he suspected he was making a joke of him.

“What is this fine story ye are telling of, Master Fitzhaye?” he said, turning to the door which was opened at the instant by his wife, whose eager look seemed to enquire what business an almost total stranger could have with her husband at that early hour of the morning, “I can’t make out what discovery you can have that can do me good; and it seems very odd to me that you should want me to make a pack of promises about I don’t know what.” Fitzhaye repeated that he was acquainted with a circumstance which might prove very advantageous to both, but of course he should not discover it un-

less he might be assured of sharing the advantage. He then explained to him the nature of the agreement he required, and after much fishing on the part of the wily farmer, and determined reserve in Fitzhaye, Hardy agreed to accompany him to the office of a brother who practised the law; and they set off for town together, Hardy deeply ruminating on the occurrence, and not very willingly acceding even in thought to the sharing any good with another, if there was a possibility of retaining the whole to himself.

An icy selfishness, a contracting avarice, surrounded the heart of this man. Continually seeking to accumulate wealth, he seemed to regard others only as the sources from which he was to draw it, but to expend any thing without the prospect of redoubled gain was like drawing the life blood from his veins.

Beyond the pleasure of accumulation, nothing appeared to give him so much satisfaction as the faults of others in their

management of pecuniary concerns. To the unfortunate, was in his estimation to be either a criminal or a fool. Were the affairs of any one deranged, it was immediately referred to his misconduct, and he never failed to applaud himself when such instances occurred, giving to his frigid parody the specious names of forethought and prudence. Thus, never diverging from the centre of his own selfishness, destitute of the kindly sympathies of nature, and placed in a situation which gave him ample opportunities for the exercise of his arbitrary disposition, he was the oppressor of the weak and the humble; the timid and the feeble were too often crushed by the heavy exactions of his avarice, as his heart seemed closed against all sufferings but those which were individually experienced, and under a sense of these he was impatient, morose, and tyrannical. Such was the character of the man who conducted the extensive farming concern of Bentley, and who, as a man of business, never los-



ing sight of the main chance, and having always a sharp look out upon the "rascally labourers," enjoyed the entire confidence of his employer, to whose coffers, when he brought additional wealth, he took good care to reserve a portion for his own. He was never questioned as to the means by which that wealth was obtained, the thought never adverted to the many oppressions he made those to feel, who condemned to perpetual labour, in order to obtain the mere necessities of life, have a claim on the humanity and compassion of those who, by the possession of property, have obtained power over them. Those useful members of the community, who, born with no other possession than their own strength, are obliged to devote that strength to the use of others, and hence have a just claim to due support and the stimulus of kindness from those who profit by their labours.

The sole object, however, of the wealthy agriculturist and his avaricious dependant, was accumulation, the one to hoard, the



other to expend, yet equally urged by the same cold selfish principle. With the narrow policy, however, which invariably accompanies it, they defeated in some degree their object by their arbitrary measures; for, hated and despised, necessity alone induced the distressed labourer to apply to the hard-hearted Hardy. It was no service of the heart, no willing submission.

Attended by such an uncongenial companion, Charles Fitzhaye entered the office of his brother, an upright, generous, and humane attorney. The business was explained, and Edward Fitzhaye prepared to draw up the agreement. The trio would have formed no bad subject for the pencil: the man of law with his pen in his hand, the fair white sheet of paper before him, in the attitude of deep thought lest he should omit in the professional document some important technical phrase, which might invalidate a deed which was to raise his brother perhaps to indepen-

dence by only a moiety of the anticipated treasure; Charles, with the greatest gravity, suited to the consequence of the secret he was about to communicate; and the farmer, with a stare of mingled suspicion and vague hope, with his mouth wide open as if to assist his respiration impeded by intense expectation, and his ears pricked up in full preparation to hear the welcome sound which was to notify to him the acquisition of riches. At length the agreement was concluded, and the farmer was requested to affix his signature. But this was no easy task to obtain: the whole suspicion of his character seemed to be aroused, and the little confidence he had displayed by attending Charles, to be entirely banished by the formidable appearance of a written agreement, he began to think some pecuniary *sacrifice*, rather than acquisition, would be the result, and could not be made to comprehend how he could sign an agreement till he knew what it was for. During this state of indecision on his

part, and of explanations and persuasions on that of Fitzhaye and his brother, he employed himself with stroking down his hair, twirling his hat, pulling up his boots, (which seemed a favourite action,) taking numberless pinches of snuff from a large iron snuff-box, picking with his stick about a hundred holes in the floor, and sitting upon his chair as if it were formed of heated iron. At length rising abruptly, and turning towards the door, "Dang it," he exclaimed, "I won't sign it; why, I may sign away money. 'Tis all a fudge, Master Fitzhaye, you shan't make a fool of me, I can tell you, so good morning to ye. I might have set old Ellis to have weeded that piece of turnips all the time I have wasted in being shut up here." Darting a look of asperity towards Charles, he was actually quitting the office; when Charles, who began to think all his prospects of discovery were about to vanish from before him, was directed by his good genius to try one more argument upon his

obstinate companion, which, as it immediately referred to himself, he hoped might prevail.

The glance which Fitzhaye had caught of Hardy's "better half," had led him to think there was a portion of acidity in her disposition: and some remonstrances to the dairy wench uttered in no piano key or delicate choice of words, which had met his ear during the interview with the farmer, had confirmed the impression of the lady's physiognomy, while a certain undefinable expression in the hard features of the "good man," induced him also to believe that he was not altogether devoid of fear respecting domestic authority, political influence, and a tongue which seemed not always to utter the law of kindness.

Charles remembered also the keen glance of curiosity with which the lady housewife had regarded him, and rightly conjectured that she was impatiently waiting for the return of her husband, to relieve her from the uneasy feeling of ignorance as to the

object of his early conference, and abrupt departure with Fitzhaye. All this passed the active imagination of the intelligent tradesman in an instant of time, and catching hold of Hardy's arm as he was approaching the door of the office, he observed, "But, Sir, do recollect that you have left Mrs. Hardy at home in the greatest suspense as to your visit to town, and you must satisfy her as to the object which induced you to quit home so abruptly."

In a moment this necessity seemed to rush upon his imagination: the unceasing questions of his wife, her jealousy, her violence, her irritating remembrance of the smallest cause of offence, the danger of his brittle property, which had more than once suffered from the ebullitions of her passion—all rose in array before him. He considered, that if any good came from the affair, it might mollify her asperity; and if nothing advantageous resulted, he could declare that Bentley had desired him to act. He appeared at once released from



his scruples, and returning to the writing-table, he laid his stick across it, placed his hat upon it, felt for his spectacles in the large flap pocket of his scarlet waistcoat, sat down on the corner of the chair, put his spectacles on, and taking the pen offered by Edward Fitzhaye, he pointed to the paper, and enquired where he must write? The place was pointed to him; he moved his chair a little back, and making a long flourish with his pen over the space he was going to fill, he wrote in large flourishing letters, "Jeremiah Hardy."

This important business concluded, Fitzhaye divulged the secret to his expecting auditor, at the same time shewing him the piece of gold. Had a mine of it appeared within his grasp, the farmer could hardly have evinced more delight, as far as he was capable of shewing it by external signs. His little eyes twinkled like two glow-worms, his majestic nose was treated with an uncommon profusion of snuff, and he was impatient to be gone that the field



might be ploughed upon the spot where the piece was found, Charles Fitzhaye being present.

They accordingly set off, and took their road by the cottage of Burton, who was to be employed in the job. Hardy secretly grudging the prize the poor man had obtained, and even devising means to prevent his full enjoyment of it ; for he hated Burton, because he kept himself from the parish, and would not truckle to him. Arrived at the cottage, they found Burton busily employed in clipping a beautiful quick-set hedge of his own planting, which parted his garden from the common. "That job won't fill the bellies of your brats, I should think, unless you boil the twigs tender ; but mayhap you may wish them choaked," was the brutal salutation of this lord of the poor to the industrious Burton. "I have no need, thank God," replied the cottager, "to feed my children with quick, Master Hardy ; if you just look over the hedge, you will see some

cabbages I count as fine as any in the Squire's garden, not to say yours. My potatoes too have turned up mainly, and so has my *ingions*, and my carrots and sichy, I have been main lucky with my plot o' ground, thank God."

"Ah, ah! you are always a boasting," replied Hardy, with a bitter look of envy; "if you get on so well, I wonder you are so craving for work, as you are to the Squire; no wonder neither, if you can plough up bank notes." Burton, who was on the opposite side of the hedge, which was high where he stood, had not perceived Fitzhaye with his imperious neighbour, and of course was astonished at the remark respecting the notes; his colour forsook him, at a discovery he could not account for, to the man of all others he could have wished it concealed, although he had fully intended to have related the whole affair to Bentley, who had given him the job. "Yes, to be sure, Master Hardy, I was right 'lucky in that job; I little

thought what it was when I picked up that black looking thing; but you don't envy me, a poor man, for such a chance, or I should say providence, do you?"—"Envy *you*, no, poor devil, what made that enter your head; but I want you to come and plough, and search the field right well, if there arn't some more of the same black pieces, as ye call um.—Here's Mr. Fitzhaye and I are going shares, and if we don't find any, we must have part of your easy got gains."

Again poor Burton's colour fled from his cheek, and drops of agitation, mingled with those of toil, rolled down his temples as he took off his straw hat, and placed a handkerchief within it to preserve him from the faint suffusion. "Do you want me to go now, Master Hardy?" he said, dejectedly. "Yes, directly; why, you have no job in hand but this — hedge, have you?"—"Not to day, but I hope Mr. Mansel will send for me to-morrow: he told my boy Harry he had a piece of peas

to thresh, and he wished I would do them.” —“ And arn’t I to be sarved before that fellow Mansel, a broken down rascal.— Ask him, from me, whether we are to have a farthing in the pound. What business had he to go to assist that fool Wetherby, though he is his brother-in-law, and got turned out of his farm; and now Mansel’s creditors have to suffer? It is enough to try the patience of Job.” —“ I don’t know nothing about that,” replied Burton, “ I only know Master Mansel is a good master to me, and kind to every body as far as he can.” —“ Yes, at other people’s expense, though,” rejoined Hardy sullenly.—“ Well, will you leave off clipping that fine hedge, and go with Mr. Fitzhaye and me to the Five Acre?” —“ Yes, as soon as I have told my wife, who is now alone, all the children being employed except the little un, and she is so sadly, I don’t like to leave her all alone; I’ll see if neighbour Elby or her girl can come in.” —“ Well, follow us as fast as you can to

the field, and I will go home and send the plough." Saying this, Hardy motioned to Fitzhaye to accompany him, and Burton, apparently with reluctance, quitted his employment to prepare to follow them.

The ingenuous and humane spirit of Fitzhaye revolted from the hardhearted imperious being with whom he was now associated, and he regretted that his desire of prosecuting a discovery which had awakened his curiosity and speculative genius was so unluckily attended with the exhibition of dispositions so diametrically opposite to his own. He accompanied Hardy to his house, and the plough and horses were speedily got ready by an underling labourer who took them to the field, the farmer and his companion following, the former having found, much to his satisfaction, that his wife had been sent for during his absence to attend a female neighbour in the "hour of nature's sorrow;" thus giving him an uninterrupted opportunity of making the desired disco-



very of the buried treasure. They proceeded to the spot, where they found Burton, who was directed to plough deep in the place where he had discovered the piece of gold, while the eyes of the farmer seemed to penetrate each clod; and those of Fitzhaye, from a far different motive, were equally vigilant as the implement upturned the soil. No success, however, rewarded the toil. The farmer then proposed that the whole field should be ploughed up, and other ploughs were sent for to expedite the job, during the progress of which Hardy's eyes seemed rivetted to each ploughshare in their turn: he followed the furrow from one to the other, apparently unmindful of time or the cravings of nature, but the poor men not being animated with the same hopes, now he had any concern in it, were not so insensible to fatigue; the job however, with the aid of a few shillings from Fitzhaye, was accomplished, but no treasure was found. Thus ended the airy specula-



tion of Fitzhaye, which he had followed up not for lucre, but from a genuine spirit of discovery : indeed, he thought the chances so much in favour of some discovery of valuable antiquity, that he deemed it would have been a supine ignorance not to have pursued it. The disappointment of Hardy was excessive, and would have been expressed in terms of asperity, had he not privately determined to prosecute the search. Much fatigued, the whole party quitted the field ; and as Hardy presented no inviting aspect, Fitzhaye bid him good day, telling he would take an early opportunity of seeing him again, as his hopes were by no means dispelled by their present want of success. At the same time he somewhat softened the mercenary Hardy by offering him a pecuniary remuneration for the loss of time he had occasioned him, which was meanly accepted. Fitzhaye also handsomely rewarded the ploughman, and as his direct way home was by the cottage of Burton, he walked with

him, for he loved to study nature in all her modifications and varieties. He made himself so pleasant to the cottager, that on reaching the cottage, Burton asked if he would not walk in a bit and rest himself, and eat a few nice damsons he had been picking. Fitzhaye readily accepted the invitation, and after taking a survey of the well-stored garden, they entered the clean little room of the cottage. The appearance of this apartment indicated, that in the midst of poverty care and industry will preserve comfort. Every thing proved that both were exercised in this poor abode. The floor was of brick, and far from being level; many of the bricks being worn away, but they were white as labour could make them, and neatly sanded. The fire-place was of ancient date, but the corners were nicely whitened, the sides of the grate bright, and an old-fashioned boiler which hung over the scanty fire had a lid as bright as silver, the front of the utensil being the same. To shield the fire-place

from the draft of the door which opened near it, an old blue curtain was made to pass round it on a bent rod: it bore visible marks of housewifery in the numerous patches which kept it together. Within this sheltered corner was a high straight-backed armed chair, and a small round deal table as white as scrubbing could make it. An ancient bureau, large oaken chest and table, and knife-case, exhibited equal appearance of female cleanliness; and a cuckoo clock completed what might be termed the principal furniture of this humble apartment, though we must not omit that on a small shelf, out of the reach of the children, lay an old-fashioned Bible, with the cover neatly shielded with a piece of checked cloth, and an old copy of the *Whole Duty of Man*, with a few religious tracts of later date. Entering this room, Fitzhaye was requested to sit down, and rest himself a bit. "I will just go and see how my wife is now, if you please, Sir, as I have been gone so long." Fitzhaye

desired him not to mind him on any account, and the affectionate husband went into an inner room, leaving the door partly open. Within it, Fitzhaye perceived the old-fashioned and scanty, but not tattered yellow bed, and patchwork quilt as clean as gay; the furniture of the apartment consisted but of little more than this: a cradle, a chair or two, little table, and a chest of rickety drawers. An hour glass stood on the sill of the casement window within view of the invalid, who was concealed by the curtain from the sight of Fitzhaye, but whose low voice was distinctly heard, hushing the weak wail of an infant. Some conversation passed between the poor couple, when Burton returned, bearing in his arms a sleeping boy about three years of age. "Is that your youngest child?" enquired Fitzhaye. "No, Sir, I ha got one about two months old; but this little fellow is rather too much for his mother when he is awake, so I have taken him away."—"He seems a fine strong fellow,"

observed Fitzhaye, pressing the vigorous leg of the boy. "Yes, thank God, my little ones are all brave and strong," replied the gratified father, "I suppose we shall have them all trooping in soon, I think I hear their voices." He was right: the whole family, except the eldest, were seen to enter the wicket of the garden, buoyant in health, and infant happiness. Bill, of boiled mutton notoriety, appeared the only one who looked at all unhealthy; but his father, on Fitzhaye observing his delicate appearance, said it was only his look, for he never ailed any thing, and was the heartiest among them, but very dashed and timid. He bore in his hand a large brown jug of milk, and his pale face was stained with the juice of blackberries, which gave him a curious appearance, in which the whole group more or less partook. The little boy and girl, who had attracted the notice of Eveleigh, had each their pinafore filled with nuts; and a smaller child was dressed out with wild flowers



and rushes, of which she seemed infinitely proud.

A stout boy, rather younger than Bill, was dragging with all his might, assisted by a little thing about five or six years old, a box on low wheels, filled to the top with manure which all had been employed in gathering from the public road.

As this family group came near the door of the cottage, Burton put his finger up, and said, "hush." In a moment the loud laugh, the childish merriment ceased, and each whispering each other, disburdened themselves of their respective loads. The boy with the milk pulling off his half hat, bowed to Fitzhaye, and setting down the jug, said to his father, "Mr. Mansel bid me tell you, father, to go and thresh the peas to-morrow; and he is going to kill a pig, and you may have some of the cuttings." The little ones, laden with nuts, in a very orderly manner hung up their hats, and returning to their father, asked if they might not go and give mother some



nuts, and tell her what nice butter-milk Mrs. Mansel had given them for their supper, with some taties? Being permitted to enter the apartment of the invalid, the others remained till they returned, all in turn being allowed the privilege. "Your children appear under due command," observed Fitzhaye. "Yes, poor dears, we must keep them in order, you know, sir, or we should be distracted with the noise of so many; but sir, though I am strict, my children love me and their mother better than if we let them romp and tear about without heeding them."—"I believe so," replied Fitzhaye, "and should like to see some of my acquaintance of the same opinion." The little sleeper now awoke, and seeing a stranger, clung round the neck of his father, who, setting him on the ground, said, "My Robin, now make a pretty bow to that gentleman, and let him see what a brave man you are." The pride of the little fellow was roused, he rubbed his eyes, and made his obeisance in very good

style, concluding the ceremony with the frank avowal that he was very hungry.

"Well, you shall have your supper when neighbour Elby comes in, but you must wait till then," said Burton. "There, (stroking down the glossy ringlets of the infant Robin,) you may all go and play awhile, but don't make a noise, because of poor mother."—"No, father, no, father," was repeated by all, and away they ran. Fitzhaye expressed his pleasure at the orderly appearance of this numerous family, made several enquiries respecting Hardy and Bentley, and concluded by advising the cottager not to make use of any of the money till the return of his employer; and in order that he might obtain every thing requisite for the restoration of his wife, he offered a pound note. "Indeed I can't take it, Sir," said Burton, gently putting aside the hand of Fitzhaye, "for a gentleman gave us a pound t'other day, and my wife has seen him to-day, and he says he gave it to us to use as we like; so,

Sir, we don't want no more at present, and thank you kindly. God Almighty is very good to warm your heart towards a poor man as he has done. I don't much expect, Sir, that Master Hardy will like my keeping the money you gie me for the gold, he is so hard upon poor folks like."—"Why, my good fellow, he has no right to deprive you of it; how far Mr. Bentley may be authorized to do so I cannot tell, but I cannot think you will be required to give it up. I must insist upon your taking this note, you fairly earned it, I am sure, to-day.—There it is," he continued, as he laid it on the book shelf; "I am but the steward of Him who inspired *that* Holy Book: it is the gift of your heavenly friend through an unworthy servant."—"Ah, Sir, I wish all the rich folks would think so, but God tries us many ways, and riches are a snare as well as poverty; God preserve you and me, Sir, from being taken in the toils. He has given me, blessed be His goodness, a contented heart, and many, many bless-

ings, and I pray he may preserve my trust in his mercy and loving-kindness." Fitzhaye was not surprised at the warmth and energy with which Burton thus uttered the strength of his faith; for he was aware that the study and the conviction of divine truth enlarges the capacities of the soul, and makes the bosom of the most ignorant and simple glow with a heavenly ardour superior to that of human genius, unvisited by the glorious ray, as the corruscations of the living stars of the firmament are to the feeble light of a taper.

Having regaled himself with some of the fine damsons to which he had been invited, Fitzhaye took leave of his simple host, telling him he most likely would soon see him again, and insisting that he should not attend him through the garden, gay with hollyhocks and Michaelmas daisies, he turned his steps homeward. On the green he found the juvenile group assembled: he gave each of the children sixpence and a kiss, and ere he had proceeded many

yards they all scampered into the cottage, eager to show their respective riches, greater than they had ever before possessed. To those who have experienced mental evils only, to dwell on the miseries of poverty may convey the notion of a coarse mind; but when we recollect the heart-rending feelings of the father and the husband, (and those feelings are generally intense in unrefined and simple individuals,) to see the wife of his bosom, the mother of his children, sinking into a premature grave through privation of those necessities so essential to sustain her constitution, under the cares, the labours, and the pains of maternity, we shall not be surprised that the timely aid Burton had found was received with the deepest gratitude, more especially when it was soon apparent that the relief afforded to the oppressed mind, as well as the restoratives to the debilitated frame, were equally salutary; so that the invalid was soon enabled to quit her bed, and finally, to re-



sume that active part in the care of her family which had justly procured her the character of a good wife and excellent manager. In short, the little cottage of Burton was once again the abode of health, as it had never ceased to be, that of content and love.

There was, however, one who envied the happiness which could not visit his own mercenary heart.

The content and frank independence of Burton, and his avowed attachment to the worthy but unfortunate Mansel, rendered him an object of hatred and ill will to the arbitrary Hardy, and the acquisition of a few pounds added envy to those base feelings. On the return of Bentley, he immediately related the whole occurrence, adding, "That insolent fellow Burton ought not to have the value of what he found in your field; nobody has any right to it but yourself, or any you choose to give it up to."—"Why come to the strictness of it; I know well enough, Jerry, it is mine," re-



plied Bentley ; “ but if I took it from him, the people would all call me mean, and hang it, for the value of ten pounds I should not like to have my name bandied about as a mean dog.”

Thus did vanity urge him to grant an indulgence which ought to have flowed from a far more exalted principle. How fluctuating and imperfect is that morality which is thus dependent on wavering and arbitrary opinion, whose foundation must be continually changed by the various circumstances and situations of life ! How different from that virtue which is founded upon religion, and the simple maxim it involves, “ Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you.” This is a beacon which guides contending interests to one point ; this is the unerring rule which decides every selfish doubt.

Though Hardy and his employer were equally prompted in their general conduct by worldly calculations, they did not always exactly agree upon their ingenuity.

In the present instance, Hardy could not concur in the necessity of giving up ten pounds for the credit of not being styled a "mean dog," and with a bluntness and familiarity which a consciousness of his importance to his employer had rendered habitual, he replied to the remark of Bentley, "Well, you are to do as you like to be sure, but hang me if you do not repent it, you will soon find that fellow Burton so insolent, that he will poison all the workmen, and we shall mayhap not get one on our own terms to do any thing. I wish you had seen the fellow when I wanted him to plough the field; he made a thousand excuses about his sick wife, that rascal Mansel, and every thing he could rip up, to avoid ploughing it before me; but I warrant ye he and Mansel meant to search pretty close when the moon shone. I suspect they both know a little of moon work, for Mansel would not be continually bribing the fellow with pork and 'tatoes, and such like, did he not find him main useful."

This base insinuation of dishonesty arrested the attention of Bentley, as he was quitting the stable where the conversation took place. "Hey, what is that you say? Do you think Mansel and Burton destroy, or snare the game? I wish I could prove it, they should suffer for it."—"I can't prove it certainly," replied the calumniator, "for I don't walk the fields at night; but you know your fields are poached, and it is likely by those two fellows, who seem so hand and glove."—"Well, we must see about it," replied Bentley, and confirming his asseveration with a shocking oath, he declared, that if he found Burton guilty, he would not only take the ten pounds from him, but prosecute him to the utmost rigour of the law. Hardy had gone rather too far, he had not intended to awaken such a resolution to find out the real poachers, as he was too closely connected with them; he meant only to arouse the suspicions of Bentley against two individuals whom, with a horrid malignity, he sought

to injure, and to deprive of their good name because they possessed little else.

“ Well well, don’t be rash,” he observed to the irritated Bentley, “ leave it to me ; I shall find out the rascals, I dare say, with the assistance of that honest fellow Jack Atkins ; I wish it had been his luck, poor fellow, to have got the ten pounds.”

This honest Jack Atkins happened to be the nephew of Jeremiah Hardy, a boy whom he had trained to act upon the same *liberal* and honest principles as himself ; he was therefore a fit agent in the subordinate details of any mercenary or malignant plan he wished to effect. He was known, however, by Bentley, to be a very indifferent workman, and more especially an inferior ploughman : the allusion, therefore, to him in connection with ploughing the “ Five Acre ” was rather ill-timed in the irritated state of Bentley’s temper. “ Why, you talk like an old fool as you are,” he said sullenly to Hardy ; “ how could Jack

ever have found the gold, when you know he can't plough a rood; I tell you none but Burton could have brought that field to the state it is. But let us hear no more of it; find out about the poaching, and leave the rest to me." Hardy, who was not very well pleased at being so uncourtously styled an old fool, muttered something between his teeth, and re-entered the stable, while Bentley quitted the yard with his mind disgusted by the suspicions so basely infused by his malignant retainer.

It is, we believe, a maxim which admits of fewer exceptions than many others, that in proportion as we injure our fellow-creatures, they become the objects of our hatred. Thus it was with Hardy and poor Burton; nor had the trifling observation of Bentley, when contrasting his nephew Jack Atkins with the skilful ploughman failed to add to the envy he felt at the superiority in that branch of agricultural labour. He well knew he could not substantiate his insinuations in regard to the

poaching charge, and his ingenuity indeed was put to the test, to do away the suspicions he had incautiously excited.

He diligently sought, however, every occasion of vexing, insulting, and injuring poor Burton, who had vainly sought interview with Bentley respecting the pounds. Hardy's influence had prevailed to refuse the poor man every opportunity of seeing him, until his suspicions were removed. During this state of painful suspense, and fear of having offended the Squire, Burton could obtain only casual employ at Mr. Mansel's, of course his distress became very great, and his apprehensions of his wife being again reduced very painful; yet still he never laid down his wearied limbs on his humble bed, he thanked God he had still his cottage shelter him—the cottage in which he saw the light, and which had received his ingenuity and industry many advantages and many comforts. Often, taking his humble meal with his nume



family from a large dish of smoking potatoes alone, did he silently but fervently acknowledge the goodness which had granted him the privilege of productive ground, and blessed the increase of it. There was not a tree, a spot, a corner in the garden or the cottage, but was endeared to the good Burton and his industrious wife, and which did not seem like their unalienable property by long possession, although it was but rented. But, alas! it was soon proved otherwise, and the enemy of their comfort was for a while permitted to triumph. The owner of the cottage fell into pecuniary difficulties, and one of his principal creditors was unfortunately the mercenary and envious Hardy, who, with malignant satisfaction, converted the circumstance into an engine of his hatred against the unoffending Burton.

To do this, he offered to allow the embarrassed man ample time for the liquidation of his individual debt, and to assist in the full arrangement of his very perplexed

affairs, if he would make over to him the cottage and ground occupied by Burton. The offer was too tempting to an almost desperate man to be rejected, and ere the unfortunate Burton was aware of the negotiation which was to deprive him of his endeared home, he received notice to quit it in a very short time.

The blow was a heavy one, and severe was the internal struggle, ere courage was gained to communicate the afflicting circumstance to his wife. When he did so, however, the triumph of genuine feeling and conjugal affection was strikingly displayed in that fortitude which is so frequently manifested by woman under circumstances which bow the sterner spirit of man. No weak lament, added to the sorrow and agitation of the husband, the agony of the parent. "God's will be done," was the heartfelt and pious exclamation of the afflicted mother. "Do not fret, my dear Harry, pray do not fret, I dare say we shall be able to get a little

place somewhere; we shall be together, and our children are all well and good, you know, and I am bravely. Only think how much better we are off than poor Danby and his wife; he almost always at sea, and she always ill and unhappy about him, and her children such a trouble, instead of a comfort." At this moment of tender contrast of their own remaining blessings with the state of her neighbour, the good Nancy was interrupted by the hasty entrance of one of the children, who running to his father, exclaimed, "Look here, father, this little leaf is off my gooseberry-bush; don't you think I shall have some gooseberries next summer? I hope they will be nice red ones, and as big as Bill's." This artless anticipation of the poor child overcame the assumed fortitude of the parents, a convulsive sob heaved the bosom of each, the wife grasped the hand of her husband, while she wiped off the big tear which rolled unheeded by himself down his embrowned cheek, at the

same time her own eyes filled with the tears of regret and affection.

The child wondering at an emotion, the cause of which he could not understand, looked silently at his parents, and at length repeated his question, whether he should not have some gooseberries in the summer? "I cannot tell, my boy," replied Burton, as he unconsciously crumpled the leaf between his finger and thumb, intent only on the thought that his garden would then be passed into other hands, its fruits enjoyed by other children.

"Oh, father, you have spoiled my little leaf," said the child; "why can't you tell me if I shan't have some gooseberries, I thought you could tell all about the garden?"—"I will tell you perhaps another time, my boy," said Burton, rising and going to the window, while the wife drew away the child to prevent a repetition of his ill-timed questions.

The suppressed emotion of Burton now relieved itself in a passion of tears, which

a circumstance as simple as that of his child's artless enquiries caused to flow. Directly opposite to the window grew a flourishing apple-tree: it was at this period laden with fruit, now glowing in tempting luxuriance in the bright rays of the autumnal sun; on it a robin had taken its station, and was pouring out its tender requiem to the closing season of warmth and beauty.

The tree had been planted by poor Burton, and was in its first year of full bearing: it had been watched like a favourite child, and its rich produce often contemplated with thankful delight, with many a promise to his little tribe, that each should have a share when gathered into the winter store. The social bird, that had chosen it as his favourite post, had been his constant companion through the summer whenever engaged in the cultivation of his garden, and had become so familiar as to perch on his spade, sit like a centinel on his discarded jacket, and receive the

haunted." While, however, the anxious wife suggested this plan, she shuddered at the forlornness of the place, as it was in a terrible state of dilapidation, stood on a bleak common, and remote from any dwelling. "We cannot have that now, Nancy, for Master Hardy has just bought it, because they say it is reported there is likely to be money in it, as it was once a grand place, and was spoiled in the wars. I will, I think, go to Mister Mansel, perhaps he can advise me, so that we ben't obliged to go to the poor-house."

Nancy, aware that to open his heart to a kind friend would greatly tend to relieve the spirits of her husband, encouraged the idea; and as Burton had no present employ, he immediately set out with the full purpose of requesting the advice of the worthy Mansel, whose life having been one of difficulty and trial, he possessed a genuine sympathy in the calamities of others. Burton was scarcely out of the sight of his affectionate wife, when her suppressed feel-



ings burst forth in hysteric sobs, as hurrying to her chamber to avoid the observation of her children, she closed the door, and threw herself on her knees by her humble bedside.

She uttered no word—she shed no tear, but heavy sighs burst from her overcharged bosom; her heart beat high and rapidly, and her temples throbbed almost audibly, yet did the unexpressed supplication for strength and support arise fervently to her God, the constant refuge of the genuine and habitual piety of her soul.

She was aroused from this violent state of mental conflict by the voice of a stranger in converse with her children, several of whom were employed in the garden shelling seed beans. She arose hastily from her knees, and endeavouring to resume a tranquil exterior, she entered the common room of the humble dwelling at the moment Eveleigh passed the threshold, preceded by one of the children in search

of her mother. "Your husband is not in the way, I find, Mrs. Burton," said Eveleigh, in a mild and benevolent tone, "Do you think he may be long absent?"—"I fear longer than you can wait, Sir, as he has not been gone I think many minutes; but do, pray Sir, sit down," offering at the same instant the armed chair to Eveleigh. "But if you wants him particular, Sir, I can soon send my little boy Jem after him, he will soon overtake him, I'll warrant ye."—"O yes, mother, I'll run in a minute," said a sturdy little urchin, whose glowing cheek and sparkling eyes denoted health and spirit, as he came forward, and at the sign of his mother made his due obeisance to the gentleman. "No, my brave lad, it is not material," observed Eveleigh, patting his curly pate, and accepting the seat to which he was invited. "I merely called, Mrs. Burton, to say I have a little employment on my farm, which may suit your husband, if he is now out of work; but I fear you have not yet recovered *your*

health, you do not look very strong, I will go away directly if I keep you standing." The consciousness of what had banished the portion of its wonted bloom her cheek had recovered since her long illness, renewed the agitation of poor Nancy, a suffocating sensation seized her, and the tears, which intensity of feeling had checked, now at the voice of kindness started into her eyes, as she, at the repeated desire of Eveleigh, sat down on a low chair by the side of her cradled infant, now in the profound slumber of health and innocence, its little hand grasping a crust.

The oppressed heart is naturally disposed to confidence, a look at the sleeping baby entended the feelings of the mother; the sympathetic disposition of her visitor had been proved, and a few real expressions of concern, the dictate of Eveleigh's genuine interest in the sorrows of his fellow beings, soon drew from Nancy the simple history we have related as the cause of her apparent emotion, and the

errand of her husband to Mr. Mansel. The detail was listened to by Eveleigh with that attention which in itself alone has a tendency to console the narrator; but it was already in a great measure known to him, with the addition also of the motives that had urged the despotic Hardy to the afflictive measure—motives which, if known or even guessed at by Nancy, were not by her adverted to, her account simply relating the necessity and affliction of quitting the cottage, and the probable destitution of the family. While Eveleigh admired the prudence and forbearance of the individual whom report had informed him had suffered much by the malignant conduct of Hardy towards her husband, he endeavoured to infuse hope of brightening prospects into her imagination, though he did not inform her that a more full knowledge of the transaction was the actuating cause of his present visit. Learning that Burton was then gone to Mansel's to arrange things, if possible,

for removal on the ensuing week, he said he would walk homeward that way in the probability of meeting with him, and if he should not be settled, that Burton was to attend him at the Grange on the morrow respecting the arrangements for the employment he wished him to undertake.

Kindly recommending the poor woman to keep up her spirits, and to trust in the Almighty and unwearied friend of the poor, and leaving a token of his benevolence with the children, who scampered to open the little wicket for him, Eveleigh quitted the dwelling which he had admired for the evidences of honest industry it displayed, and with a strong feeling of the value of such a home to a poor man.

With his thoughts busy in a projected benevolent plan he silently pursued his walk, which, for a considerable distance, skirted a noble wood, now enriched with the variegated tintings of autumn.

The benevolent reveries of Eveleigh did not make him insensible to the pathetic in-



fluence of the scene. It was the habitual practice of his meditative mind to draw sweet lessons from the ample volume of Nature, as it was page by page unfolded by the great Creator. He was now reminded forcibly and pathetically of his own fleeting nature, as he marked the quivering leaf with embrowned or yellow hue show his onward path, and the keen and eddying blast collecting them in heaps at the feet of those towering monarchs of the woods they had so late adorned with verdant crowns.

“It is thus,” thought Eveleigh, “that man, glorying in his strength and vaunting his beauty, passes from his earthly state, making room for a greener race. Yet, blessed be God, the analogy goes no further; these withering honours of the forest shall never see another spring, but man, though he perishes in the prime of youth, or the winter of age, shall alike be renewed in an eternal spring. Yes, though here doomed to wither and decay, he shall arise



from the tempests of life, to one unclouded calm and radiant day of joy and peace."

We now leave the stroller to pursue this interesting train of reflection, and hasten to explain how he became acquainted with the motives and conduct of Hardy respecting Burton.

Having some timber to dispose of, Eveleigh was desirous to obtain the judgment of Bentley respecting its value, having very good reason to think his knowledge was correct, and that he might probably even become the purchaser. He therefore determined to walk over to Prospect Lodge, the general invitation he had received precluding the necessity of giving any notice of his intended visit. Well acquainted with the private and secluded paths which passed through the estate, (having explored them all with Bentley,) he preferred walking through them rather than taking the public road. One of these paths passed close to some outbuildings belonging to Hardy's farm: it was re-

markably close and retired, and several rough seats were placed at intervals in small green spots, marking several entrances into a grove almost impervious to the light of day. On one of these seats Eveleigh had seated himself, for it was a fit haunt for meditation or that vague reverie we often honour with the term. The gambols of a squirrel soon gave a definite object to his thoughts, as he watched it busily employed gathering nuts from the numerous hazels forming the thick underwood of the grove.

Every thing was hushed around, except the rustling of the dry leaves, the hum of the bees, and the soft note of the robin, as it warbled its gentle song.

This tranquillity was suddenly disturbed by the rushing of a fine spaniel through the thick hedge, and the sound of voices very near. "Rover, Rover!" arrested the progress of the dog. At the well-known sound, it retreated as precipitately as it entered the embowered path, and

Eveleigh concluded it belonged to some passing sportsman. The sound of voices, however, became more distinct, and at length he heard, without any attempt or wish to listen, the following dialogue uttered in a key not the most refined. "Well Jack, boy, I have managed the matter for ye; that fellow Burton must leave his cottage, and there it is, all ready for ye, my lad."—"But uncle, tell me how ye could contrive that; I thought Burton always paid right well his rent, and Cropley was quite satisfied with um?"—"Ah, ah, that's all right, but like a fool, Cropley, ye see, gets over head and ears in debt: and what with the loss of his burnt wheatstack, and his bad haysel, he must ha broke outright, if I had not given him time with that hundred pound he owes me; so I told him I would sartainly arrest him for't, if he would not make over that cottage of Burton's to me. The poor devil was scared out of his senses a'most by my threat, and soon executed the job, for I would not

budge from my resolution a bit ; so, Jack, that fellow's pride will have a fall at last, he must budge to the workhouse, and eat humble pie, I warrant. He can't boast no more of his fine garden, and his high quick hedge, and what not, as if nobody could have the like. They are all in prime order for ye, my lad, so now you may get your wedding shoes on as soon as you like, and marry that there girl at the mill, for she has got a bit of the chink, my boy. Take care of the main chance, say I, as I did, and don't be such a ninny, Jack, as to marry for love, forsooth."—"That's neither here nor there," replied the dutiful and respectful nephew; "I don't want to be troubled with a wife and a pack of brats, ye are none so peaceable at home as to recommend it overmuch; I should think, uncle, I have got other fish to fry, at present at least."—"Mum, Jack, mum, upon both those subjects," replied Hardy, with a satanic laugh.

"All's safe in the old haunted house ;

nobody will go near that after sunset, I'll warrant ye, for fear of the goblins, ha, ha ! you may manage all well if you do but keep your own counsel."—"Trust me for that, your lessons else have been strangely thrown away."—"When am I to have those oats, I have got a good customer for them?"—"Oh, get into the cottage, and then to work, my boy.—What do you think? I gulled Bentley completely, made him think that Mansel and Burton were the moonlighters ; he is full of wrath against them, and swears Burton shant have the ten pounds if he finds he is guilty. I did not mean to make him so obstreperous, but we must keep it up a little while till we have shipped off the grain, and then put him on another scent ; in the mean while, do you tell un you will have a sharp look out just to quiet him a little, d'ye see, for 'tis not a little will stop un when he is determined on a thing."

The rascal was interrupted here by the repetition of his name in a loud voice,

which Eveleigh recognized as Bentley's; and rising from his rustic seat, to which he had as it were been spell bound by the conversation he had involuntarily heard, instead of proceeding to Prospect Lodge as he intended, he retraced his steps, and sought the path to the cottage of Burton, as we have related, determined to counteract, at least the malignant intention of Hardy, of forcing the poor man to the workhouse, and also, if possible, to disclose his villainy to the too credulous Bentley. In the meanwhile, Burton had the desired interview with Mansel, who sincerely participated in his affliction, especially as he had little power essentially to serve him.

He promised, however, to lose no time in looking out for some habitation as a temporary resource; and added, that if he could not succeed, he would get Tom Slatter to run up a little chimney in his small empty barn, where poor Burton and his family might manage till something could



be settled respecting him, promising to see Mr. Wilmot about it. Burton felt soothed and cheered by the kindly interest of his master, and returned home in far better spirits than he had quitted it.

He was walking thoughtfully on, when the affable salute of Eveleigh interrupted his reverie. "Well, my good fellow," said the latter, "I have been to your cottage, and hearing you were gone to Farmer Mansel's, have walked this way to meet you. I find from your wife that you have not any employment at present, and am come to enquire if you are willing to engage in a pretty long job for me?"—"I shall be very glad indeed, your honour, if you do not want me just this week, for I am obliged to go out of my cottage, and haven't got another yet, so we are sadly unsettled, as one may say, for awhile."

"The employment I am going to give you is not material for a short time," replied Eveleigh; "but do not trouble yourself about a habitation, for I have a very

good cottage I now want to be occupied, the rent is low, the situation near the Grange, and there is a good piece of ground attached to it, which will repay your labour, I think, quite to your wish." During this offer of Eveleigh the poor man exhibited unequivocally in his varying features, his changing colour, his gently moving lips, his expressive uplifted eyes, his astonishment, his joy, his gratitude at this unlooked for relief to his anxieties.

When Eveleigh paused, he attempted to utter his thanks, but the words died on his tongue, and he passed his rough hand over his eyes to brush off the starting tear before it should be observed. At length he falteringly said, "O Sir! O, your honour, how shall I thank you? My poor Nancy bid me hope, for God was good, and would hear our prayer. He has indeed then heard us. How kind you are Sir, to wait too, and we shall now cheerfully move our little matters, and we shall not be obliged to take our children to the

workhouse, where they would get so sadly corrupted with the bad boys and girls. God makes us thankful too to you, Sir, though we cannot express, mayhap, as the quality do." A benevolent smile was the reply of Eveleigh to this grateful effusion of the delighted Burton, who added, "Don't you think, Sir, I had better go and tell Master Mansel of your goodness, he will be so pleased, and it will spare him the trouble of axing Mr. Wilmot?"—"Certainly," replied Eveleigh, "but tell him not to name the circumstance at present, as it will be better for you to remove without that rascal Hardy knowing any thing of it."

A look of surprise from Burton reminded Eveleigh that he was unacquainted with the grounds of the severity of his expression respecting Hardy. "Mr. Bentley's bailiff is no friend of your's, I am afraid," he observed, "I have heard he did not treat you well about a piece of gold you found."—"Master Hardy is not a

poor man's friend, Sir; he seemed to envy my finding the gold, and I have reason to think has set my master, the Squire, against me, for I cannot get to see him, though I have been to the Lodge I do believe a score of times, to know if I may keep the money Mr. Fitzhaye gave me."—"Well, my friend, you will soon be removed from Hardy's power, and I cannot doubt Mr. Bentley will allow you to keep the ten pounds I am glad to find you obtained for the gold."—"It was a great Providence indeed, your honour; and if so be I get work to do, and the squire will let me keep the money, I intend to put it into the saving bank for my children, your honour; they are main good things for the poor folks, your honour, don't you think they are?"—"They are indeed, and I much approve of your intention," replied Eveleigh, who was highly pleased that the provident suggestion emanated from Burton himself, as it confirmed the opinion he had formed that the cottager possessed

that humble but manly independence of mind which enables an individual to stem the torrent of misfortune, to meet opposition, and ennobles his character, whatever be his rank or station in society.

“As I wish your wife to see the cottage I propose you should occupy,” observed Eveleigh, “before she finally becomes its mistress, I will send my light cart for her to-morrow, in which, if you like, you may pack some articles of furniture, for the cottage is quite in order to be inhabited.” —“Thank you kindly, Sir. Poor Nancy, how pleased she will be when she hears of your goodness, Sir.” —“Does your wife understand the management of a dairy?” enquired Eveleigh. “Bless ye, yes, Sir! she was dairy-maid in a large dairy-farm when I courted her, and it would have done your heart good, your honour, to see how beautiful clean every thing was; all the gentry wished for the butter and cheese she made. She is counted main clever indeed about cows, and though I say it that

should not say it, my Nancy can turn her hand to any thing almost, and she brings up our girls to help her in every little matter we have of baking, and washing, and cleaning, and sewing; she won't let them be idle, Sir, and poor dears, they are so proud to help mother, and so merry when they please her in washing and such like." Poor Burton had got upon his favourite theme, the good management of his wife, and the cheerful industry of his little girls, the comforts of which he daily experienced in his neat, quiet, orderly abode; each had an allotted duty, and each knew it must be performed, if they desired the approving smile, the affectionate encouragement of their mother, or desired to form one of the family circle, from which they were excluded if any symptoms of obstinacy or waywardness appeared. "When you become my tenants," said Eveleigh, smiling at the poor man's simple eulogy of his wife, "I shall find employment for all of you, and I hope you will very soon find



yourselves quite at home in my dairy-house, where your wife will have to render her assistance to the old lady who occupies a part of it." Saying this, Eveleigh bade his rustic companion good day, and pursued his walk homewards, while Burton returned, as proposed, to Mansel's, informed him of the unexpected change in his prospects, and then hastened home to communicate the glad tidings to his dear Nancy. By the time he reached the close lane in which his cottage was situated, twilight had mantled every object, and the little taper of his wife glimmered cheerily through the gloom, while a few stars gradually made their appearance in the dark blue vault of heaven. The evening was calm and serene, a few fleecy clouds appeared as harbingers of the rising moon, and ere he had reached his little garden wicket her pale light illumined his humble dwelling.

In the mean while, his anxious wife had sent all her children to early repose, placed

her baby in its wicker couch by her side, and prepared her husband's supper, if possible, with more than her wonted care. The hearth was trimly swept, the brick floor fresh sanded, now the juvenile feet were expected no more, the armed chair was placed in the snug corner, the little round table by its side, covered with a coarse but delicately clean cloth: the knives and forks were ready laid, the plates on the sides of the fire-place, the brown mug in preparation for the unusual treat of a little home-brewed beer kept for particular occasions, and Nancy thought, when her husband was unhappy, *that* was the right time to taste the luxury his industry had procured. The coarse dish stood ready to receive a nice piece of pork, the gift of Mrs. Mansel, and some greens, the fresh produce of the garden. To complete the preparations for a meal, at which love was to preside, a specimen of Nancy's skill in baking was displayed in a beautiful light crusty loaf expressly made for Harry's supper. The fire

glowed cheerily, and the bubbling pot announced that the cooking proceeded properly. Nancy was seated, repairing the damages which her children's habiliments had met with in the day, that they might be all in readiness by the morrow, while the cat lay purring at her feet in the full enjoyment of the fire. The eye of the expecting wife was alternately turned to the cookery, the cuckoo clock, her infant charge, and the window, while she repeated often half audibly, "Harry is gone a long time, sure nothing has happened! sure he will come soon! there is such a nice supper for him, poor fellow!—It looks to me very dark, and is getting sadly late. Ah!" she added, while she started at the well-known sound, "There he is, thank God! that is the gate, I hear his step," and she was at the door in a moment.

The quick ear of affection is seldom deceived: it was indeed Harry, who, with rapid step, passed the path to the door. The latch was already lifted—"Well,

Nancy dear," he said in a cheerful tone, as he entered the room, "I have been gone a long time, hav'nt I? But I bring good news, and am ready for my supper, I can tell you, my girl." Nancy was surprised at the different state of spirits her husband was evidently in, to when he quitted her, and was of course utterly unable to account for a change occurring as it had in so short a time. "Have you seen Mr. Mansel, Harry?"—"O yes, and I have a great deal to tell you."—"Well, but get your supper first," and the careful wife soon displayed the savory fare to the keen appetite of Burton, while the brown jug offered its foaming contents to his view.

Nothing loth, he enjoyed his unwonted feast, while he related the joyful news to the grateful Nancy, whose thankfulness burst forth in exclamations of surprise and pious reference to the goodness of God. "Dear me," she added, "and the good gentleman never said a word to me neither, but was so familiar, and so kind like,

you cannot think. I knows Westwood Grange quite well, it is a very cheerly place. Well, I will be sure to be ready early against the gentleman sends, that was so thoughtful about the things, was'nt it, Harry? Well, as we must leave this poor place we like so much, I wish it was over with all my heart." Though Burton and his wife passed some hours after retiring to their humble couch, in conversing upon the providential change in their circumstances, they were up as soon as the day dawned, and every thing was put in order, the children regulated, their noon-tide meal prepared, and all in readiness for the arrival of the conveyance for Nancy to visit her new abode; Burton undertaking to be housekeeper and head nurse during the absence of his wife, who, habited in her Sunday dress, displayed a pleasing specimen of a true English peasant matron, with her dark cotton gown, snowy neckerchief and apron, neat close straw bonnet tied with green ribbon, and full-bordered

cap shading her fair forehead, while exercise, air, and hope, gave a soft but healthful bloom to her cheek, and animation to her light blue eyes. Much surprise was excited among the children at the appearance of their mother, and a thousand conjectures formed *why* she was dressed in her Sunday gown and bonnet, and her nice scarlet cloak in readiness to put on, and each questioned the other whether mother was going to take them with her; the little ones asking the elder girl to put on their Sunday frocks, that they might be ready. Taught never to ask troublesome questions, none ventured inquiry of their mother, who having prepared her children's dinner, consisting of an ample dish of potatoes and porridge, seated them round the cleanly served table, and began to help them to their welcome meal, when the cart from the Grange appeared at the garden wicket. Hastily rising, while her colour heightened with expectation and surprise, she was met half way in the garden path



by an aged peasant, but whose hale and happy countenance announced a green old age, and a heart free from care. "Well, neighbour," he said, with a good-humoured smile, "I see you are ready for me; my master sends word for you not to hurry or flurry yourself, for he doesn't want me. Dear gentleman, he is so considerate, and especially to old folks and women, and that shews such a good heart like, don't it, neighbour?" Without waiting reply to his observation, the old man continued: "I shall go in, d'ye see, to look at the childer; my master says you have a mort of them; God bless their little hearts, how rosy they look, and hungry too, I warrant ye. Well, there will be plenty of milk for them at Grange dairy.—Will you be my little wife, dear?" patting a little fat girl on the cheek. The child, who with the others had suspended their meal at the sight of the cart, their mother's rising, and the entrance of the old man, curiosity predominating for a time over hunger, looked

innocently in his face, and said, "Yes, if you will give me nice milk."—"It is a done thing then," replied the laughing old man: "come, gies your hand out, my bonny girl;" and he presented his open palm, upon which the child with true infantine glee clapped her own with all her might. The mother being quite ready, many admonitions and orders were repeated to the elder girls, and the younger were soothed with promises of quick return. Throwing over her comely form her ample scarlet cloak, which, though part of her wedding wardrobe, great care had preserved as fresh as new, and accompanied to the gate by her husband and the whole tribe of children, Nancy and her cheerful conductor ascended the light vehicle of Eveleigh.

"Take care I don't run away with your wife, Master Burton," said the old man, as seating himself he took his whip from the cottager, and moved gently on. "Mayhap I could make a

worse choice, I like the look of that there red cardinal, it puts me in mind of my good woman, who is dead and gone, the more's the pity for me."—"I'll trust her wi' ye, master," replied Burton, "for I think she is quite safe; so good day to ye, and happy return."—"Master has told me," said the garrulous old peasant, "that you are coming, neighbour, to live in the dairy-house, if so be ye like it, and I think you can't be off doing that, for it is most cheerly, and pleasant. Dost know old Dame Green, as has lived so many years in the dairy-house with old Squire Bromley, as left the Grange to our master Eveleigh?"—"I don't know Dame Green myself," replied Nancy, "but I have heard my mother say what a neat clean old lady she was."—"And so she is now, only getting very old and infirm like. Age will creep on us you know, neighbour; well, there is a time for all things, as the wise man says; but as I was a saying, seeing as how Dame Green is getting old, and the

rheumatics not letting her move so quick as she used to do, our master Eveleigh wants somebody that could have a feeling for her like, for to take care of her, for she has neither chick nor child, nor nobody belonging to her. And seeing as how it can't be expected that she can do the work of the dairy, and young *mothers* are often saucy to old folks, he wants a body to live in the house to help her. Dame Green was terribly afeard, that when he comed that she would have been turned out of the dairy-house to make room for a younger servant, which she said would go well nigh to break her heart at once ; and, O dear ! how she did lament about the cherry-trees, and the strawberries and raspberries, and the poultry, and all the things she had seen grow and thrive. But no, her fears were all wrong ; master said, old people did not ought to be moved from where they had lived so long, and sarved so 'faithfully,' he said ; so he told Dame Green to make herself quite easy, that she

should always keep the two rooms she lived in, and attend just as much to the dairy as she liked, or was able; and he has built an addition to the cottage, and said he would get some nice woman to live in it and help Dame Green, and wait on her as I said, and you I count are the person he has fixed on; and as you are a mother, d'ye see, you will have a naturalty to poor old Dame Green, and indulge her little whimwhams, seeing you hope, no doubt, to be old yourself, and have your childer humour you.

“Mine, God bless 'em, do so, and oft and often make their old father feel young again, when I find them all striving to please me, and now we have all got such a good master, that it is right pleasure to wait on him. ‘William,’ says he to me t'other day, ‘how old may you be?’—‘Why, your honour,’ says I, (taking off my hat, you may be sure,) ‘a good deal beyond the age of man, that is, as David says, three score and ten; I am almost

fourscore, for I am seventy-nine come next St. Thomas's Day. My mother, because of that, wanted me to be baptized Thomas, but she had a brother, your honour, that was a sailor, and he was lost at sea, and as his name was William, she concluded upon calling me William. Howsomdever, that's neither here nor there; my master, finding how old I was, said, (first bidding me put on my hat,) 'it was time for me to give up labour, that is, to wholly maintain myself, so he would allow me what I had been used to earn when I was in my strength, d'ye see, and I might work in the grounds and garden when I liked, and live with my daughter, with whom he was delighted to see I was so happy, and she so tender like.' So now you see," added the old man, "I am *gentleman* William, though you may be sure, neighbour, I don't like to be idle, so I often ax my master to employ me, and I am a sort of factotum like, ready for any thing, and he sent me, as you see, for you to-day, bidding me take care the



old grey mare did not run away with us. She don't seem much as if she would," continued he, while he hasted the pace of the well-fed steady animal, which, during his long harangue, had gradually slackened its trot, and now scarcely put one foot before another. In thus reciting the benevolence and affability of Eveleigh, the old man seemed to be animated with the enthusiasm of youth, and in all probability the theme would have been continued, had not the hamlet of Westwood appeared in view.

It consisted of a few cottages of a peculiarly neat and even adorned appearance, each having a good piece of well-fenced garden ground, and a small pasture attached: in some of the latter were a few sheep feeding, in others a cow or pony, and in most that useful animal the ass. The former were gay with autumnal flowers, and tempting with the ruddy shew of fine apples and pears. Most of the cottages possessed the hardy climbing rose,

which displayed their profusion of beautiful flowers even to the chamber windows ; many also of them presented a goodly row of neat bee-hives. In short, every thing about these simple abodes indicated there was a controuling benevolence which sought, by rendering home pleasant and attractive, to exert a salutary influence over the moral and physical lot of others. A considerable portion of this retired village was embosomed in, or rather was hidden behind the wood from which it received its name. The church steeple was now just visible above the fine old trees, as the sacred building stood on the rising ground opposite to the declivity which led to the village ; the same wood also concealed from the expecting Nancy the view of the Grange, which her communicative companion said they should soon reach.

Passing down a romantic dell, bordered on one side by a natural copse, and on the other by beautiful plantations, a turn of the road displayed the neat mansion, ra-

ther a modern erection of white brick, somewhat in the Venetian style; the grounds were highly picturesque, though not of great extent. "There is the Grange," said the old man, as he checked his horse to a gentle walk down the hill skirting the grounds. "Our good old master Bromley built it, and sure enough he left it to a worthy gentleman, and one right willing to do all the good he left undone, and that's more than often happens when people die before they have done the good they intended. Well, he will have his reward in heaven; there was not many dry eyes here when he was buried, poor gentleman, right well was he loved by the poor.—There now, do you see that slated cottage at the bottom of the meadow there, with the green shutters and the white chimneys, and that little brook running by the garden, under that pretty little bridge?" Nancy answering in the affirmative, as to the general view of these particularized objects, "Well, do you think you should

like it, neighbour? for that is the dairy-farm, and there is a gravel path all the way up from it to the Grange, through the garden shrubbery, so pleasant." The sight of this to her so superior abode, the pleasing accompaniment named by old William, and the high character given of Eveleigh, altogether so filled the bosom of Nancy with such grateful joy, that when she descended from the vehicle at the gate of a little grass court before the cottage, she was unable to utter a word. "There is Dame Green, as usual, quite busy," said old William, as he opened the wicket, and pointed to the aged inmate of the cottage, busy, as he said, in the farther part of the court putting some little chickens under a basket, while a numerous tribe followed her, evidently to be fed from her well-known hand. Her employment, and a little deafness, prevented the old lady from hearing the approach of the cart, and when old William entered, she started with surprise. "Bless me," said she, "you have

not been come long, have you?—Walk in, my dear," she added kindly to Nancy, "I have been expecting you some time." Content, cheerfulness, and a sweet placidity, marked the countenance of this ancient domestic, and plainly indicated that her bosom was the shrine of that regulating principle of genuine piety, which sheds an harmonizing influence over the manners and deportment in every rank and every station of life. Her very dress denoted she knew the proprieties of her avocation, and remembered that extreme neatness and cleanliness were peculiarly requisite in her station and employment, as well as to age. Her complexion had once been fair, and yet retained some portion of healthful bloom, though a slight shaking of the head, and a tottering step, indicated that the decrepitude of age was fast advancing.

Her dark stuff gown just reaching to the ground, and of ample fulness, was contrasted with a large double white muslin

kerchief, while her length of waist displayed the stiffened boddice which habit had rendered necessary. She wore a clean checked apron, so stiffened that the foldings were clearly visible, and over it a coarse but clean mantle, with a bib and large pocket, from which she distributed the grain to her cackling pensioners, among whom were many fine pigeons cooing for their share. A mob cap, white as the curds of her dairy, placed neatly as a Quaker's coiffure, over an old-fashioned roll, on which was tightly drawn her once auburn, but now silvered hair, formed the head-dress of this worthy dame ; and, to complete her primitive appearance, she wore black plush shoes, small silver buckles, and high heels ; and let not modern dairy-women be shocked, accident discovered that she actually wore a green stuff-quilted petticoat !

Having satisfied her ever-hungry claimants, the old lady accompanied Nancy *within* doors, while William quitted the



place with the cart, and to inform his master of the arrival of Nancy, who soon became acquainted with the ancient dairy-woman, with whom she could converse upon the subject to her heart's content. "We shall suit each other quite well, I dare say," she observed; "but, to say the truth, I was a little afraid our good master would choose a fine slimmerkin dairy-maid, and they would not suit me at all; they would be washing their white petticoats, and mayhap their flounces, instead of the cheese and the butter-cloths, and turning their fine ringlets instead of turning the churn. But I am glad to see you are such a neat body, and been used to old-fashioned dairies, for I can't relish the new ways of making butter and skimming milk." While thus recounting her own modes, and condemning the modern practices, the old lady observed Eveleigh approaching. "There is our master coming, now we shall know when you come, neighbour Burton." Eveleigh entered, and the affair was soon set-

tled. Delight and thankfulness beamed in the eyes of Nancy, and the heart of Eveleigh glowed with the consciousness of making others happy. "What, always busy, mother," he said, smiling at the old lady, putting a nice little bread-cake and fresh pat of butter on the little table, which she had covered with a fine clean napkin. "Yes, your honour, you know I must be puttering about a bit, especially to wait on you; I am in duty bound to do that, I think. How much you put me in mind of my dear old master that's gone; just so he would sit on that chair, just so he would smile, and just so he would accept my humble service."

Eveleigh took with some emotion the little cake offered by the trembling hand of the grateful domestic, and having made every requisite arrangement for the final removal of Burton's family, at the request of Nancy, said he would send William to re-convey her home. Having thus in a great degree settled the thankful Nancy,

we will take a peep at what passed at the cottage during her short absence.

Burton, in order to divert the children during the unusual absence of their mother, had gathered some of the tempting apples, and was busily employed in dividing them, when a loud halloo at the gate in no very gentle key interrupted his paternal employments; and ere he could disengage himself from the young expectants, he saw Hardy half way up the path. He went out to meet him, not without fear, or at least emotion, for he never failed to receive insult from the purse-proud bailiff.

“ I called to know when this cottage will be ready for Jack Atkins?” said Hardy, “ you seem to be in no hurry to leave it.”—“ I shall leave it by the time I had notice,” replied Burton, “ but you must think, Master Hardy, that my family can’t be moved very hastily.”—“ And why not, when there is a workhouse to go to ?” gruffly enquired Hardy; “ I’ll send them pack and package for ye in the tumbril, if

you will," he continued, advancing to the cottage door, and eyeing the garden askance as he went on. "No, I'm obliged to ye," returned Burton, "I shall move them all in time; I ar'nt going to the work-house, I believe."—"Not going to the work-house! why, where dost think you can go with a dozen children; but hey-day," seeing the apples Burton had gathered, "it's your best way, Master Burton, you don't gather the fruit, the time's not comed yet the apples should be cropt, Jack Atkins likes apples as well as your brats." Burton did not deign to notice this speech, otherways than distributing every apple among his children. Hardy stood in the door-way of the cottage into which Burton had returned, but felt too indignant to ask his unwelcome visitor in also. "What do you mean to do with all these bits of things?" said Hardy, knocking with his stick the case of the clock and the chest, and casting his eyes significantly on the other articles of furni-

ture, "I suppose you will be glad to sell them?"

"No, I hope not to be obliged to sell my things," replied Burton, "I and Nancy have worked hard to get them, and we should be sorry to part with them."—"I dare say you would," retorted Hardy with an envious laugh, "but I have heard say necessity has no law; but talk of Nancy as you call your wife, I met her just now with that chattering fellow Will Maples, that lives with that chap old Bromley left the Grange at Westwood to; I should think she had better have been at home than pleasuring at this time o' day abroad, leaving you to cram the children with apples, you have no business with now you have warning to quit."—"The matter of right will be soon settled when I do quit, Master Hardy; I am accountable to Mr. Cropley, not to you, I think; as to my wife, she is not pleasuring abroad, but was obliged to go out on a little matter of business I could not settle, and Will Maples



comed for her in Squire Eveleigh's cart." — "Do you know that chap, he is a lucky one to get that snug little estate at Westwood." — "Yes, I knows that gentleman a little, and a very kind-hearted gentleman he seems to be." — "Why, how do you know that?" enquired the inquisitive Hardy, whose visit was evidently made with the view of fishing Burton; "so you don't mean to sell your bits of goods, hey?" he resumed. "Why, if you don't go to the workhouse, where are you to find money to get a lodging, and keep your brats?" — "I certainly shall not ask you, Master Hardy, to assist me, but I hope to have some friend to help me a little on."

"I suppose you will go and spend all that ten pounds to keep up your pride then, but you would do well to remember that the Squire has not given you leave to keep it yet."

"I have no intention to spend it, you may be sure," replied Burton, "and can wait the Squire's pleasure about it,



Master Hardy, though I can't but say I should like to see him, for it seems as if I had angered him, and I am sure I don't know how." Hardy could have told him, but he chose not to do so, and unable to elicit any thing from Burton respecting his plans, he cast a repeated envious glance at the neat and comfortable appearance of the apartment, upon the threshold of which he stood brandishing his stick, somewhat to the terror of the whispering children; and again repeating that the cottage must be ready for Jack by the day fixed, he turned round, and with a surly scowl retraced his way to the lane, envying the comfort he could not destroy. The little irritation which this visit had occasioned to Burton, was nearly allayed on the return of Nancy, whose cheering account altogether dispelled the unpleasant feelings Hardy's insulting manners had excited. "Well, here is your wife safe and sound, master Burton," said old William; "and here is some nice milk for my little wife," he added, as he

drew from a basket two large stone bottles he had filled from the dairy. "Come, kiss me for it, my bonny girl." The selected pet of old William was in a moment on his knee, and her little arms round his neck, to give the requested salute, while every one had a share of the cheerful old man's jokes and notice, and each a little token of remembrance. "Now, the sooner ye all come to Westwood the better," he said, rising to go away; "I shall come and help you to move, and take care of the young ones, so good bye to ye all till I see ye again. We shall all live very merry together, I think, and ye shall all taste of my mead on St. Thomas's Day if I live, seventy-nine, I shall then be, God be thanked for his mercies. I have had my trials in my day, but he has kept up my spirits through all; and now I am a right happy old man, *gentleman* William. You know, neighbour," tapping Nancy on the shoulder, "don't forget the red cardinal, mind ye, and ye shall have my arm to church, if Harry

there promises not to be jealous.”—“ Not I indeed,” said Burton, “ I have too good a thought of my wife, so you are heartily welcome to lead her to church.”—“ Well; good day, good day to you all once more, the old grey mare will be impatient, and my master will think I am runned away.”

The old man then mounted his vehicle with the alacrity of youth, and repeating his farewell, was soon out of sight. The three following days were busily employed in the unpleasant task of moving, and due notice was given to the landlord by presenting the key of the cottage. When it came to the point to close the door, Burton and poor Nancy, in spite of their happy prospects, experienced feelings somewhat similar to those which agitated the bosoms of our first parents when they quitted Eden, yet to each the same fond thought which consoled the first exiles, now shed its influence on our cottagers, and more particularly did Nancy feel

“Thy going is not lonely; with thee goes  
 Thy husband; him to follow thou art bound;  
 Where he abides, think there thy native soil.”

Such a cheerful readiness was there in all parties at Westwood to expedite the removal of this numerous family, and so desirous were all to render things easy and comfortable, that Burton and his wife soon found themselves perfectly at home, and in the regular discharge of their respective duties; while the quiet and orderly behaviour of the children towards the ancient dame soon made them her frequent companions, and she declared, ~~if~~ she did not know which she liked best, all were so mannerly, yet so merry that they quite cheered her spirits, though she was afraid, now she had so many little waiting maids, she should grow idle.

It would be difficult to describe the surprise of Hardy when he found that Burton had obtained so comfortable a home, and the prospect of regular and constant

work. Even the possession of the cottage for his favourite Jack failed to reconcile him to the thought that he had not been able to force poor Burton to the workhouse, to "humble his pride," and render him subservient to his arbitrary will. "And is it your doing," said he to Bentley when he saw him, after ascertaining the circumstance of Burton's removal to Westwood, "is it your doing that fellow Burton is gone to Westwood?"—"Burton gone to Westwood, what made you think of that, Jerry?—It is not very likely I should trouble myself about him till I can find him out, and I should not send him away for that. Who has got his cottage then, 'tis a clean little place, that's certain, and Burton is the best workman in the parish."—"Why, the cottage is mine at present, and I have put Jack into it; but, poor fellow, he has got no money to help him forward." Bentley did not choose to notice this broad hint of Jerry's, who at his request explained how the cottage had

come into his possession. "Leave you alone to make any wind turn your mill, Jerry; who but yourself would have thought of making Cropley's mischances turn to your profit?"—"Why, that's the only way to get on in the world, arn't it? Let every one mind number one, and we should not have so many broken down fools; but if people will believe every thing that is said to them, they must and ought to suffer for it."

"And what are you going to do with that old tumble down house on the common, Jerry? I think you have nipped your own fingers there."—"Oh no, the timbers will more than pay the purchase, and mayhap I shall find I can repair, and let it."

"Let it indeed! you must first banish the goblins, or get Wilmot to lay them in the Red Sea."

"'Tis all very well, no one will go near it," observed the wily Jeremiah; I encourage the idea of its being haunted, or I should not have a board left, I dare say,



the poor people are such thieves of wood; why, there would not be even a stake left in your hedges, or a pale or post in the whole estate, if I did not every day or two examine them, and storm and rave at the rogues, and the women are even worse than the men. It would be a good thing if we could do without such a pack of thieves as the labourers are.”—“ I don’t care for a few pales and stakes,” replied Bentley, “ if they will but let the game alone; but hang me, if I could catch the poachers they should not easily escape me. Have you hunted any of them out yet, Jerry ?”—“ Not yet, but Jack and I have laid a train, if you will have a little patience we shall nab ’em, I warrant.”

“ I hope you will; in the mean time, I am going over to Westwood to-morrow, and I will put Eveleigh on the scent about Burton.”—“ You can do as you like about that,” artfully observed Hardy, “ but you must tell him to be close, for if the rogues get but an inkling of your suspicions, it

will blow up the train I and Jack have laid before the proper time, and you'll be the loser." With this caution Hardy quitted his credulous employer, as he said, to see how the threshers went on, for if they were not looked after, they sent half the corn out of the barn door with the straw. Perfectly satisfied that Hardy in every thing consulted his interest, Bentley always quitted home quite easy respecting business, well pleased to receive the weekly profits put into his hands by his faithful looker.

Accompanied by his dogs, he mounted a beautiful hunter, on the day succeeding the conversation we have related, with the purpose of passing a few days with Eveleigh, to whom he had occasionally made a morning visit, and given some useful hints respecting the management of his farm and the preparation for a plantation of some extent on an uncultivated tract of the estate. At the moment he arrived at the entrance of the grounds, Eveleigh had just concluded giving some orders to Bur-

ton relative to his projected employment, and Bentley caught a glance of the labourer as he quitted his new master to fulfil his directions. Scarcely giving him time to pay the usual salute on meeting his friend, he said, "Was'nt that Burton I saw you talking to, Eveleigh?"—"Yes, it was, Burton, your clever ploughman," replied Eveleigh; "the poor fellow was obliged to leave his cottage, and got no regular work in your parish; therefore, as my dairy-house was unoccupied, I brought him here to do that embankment by the common before we plant."—"Well, have a sharp look out about him, I warn you as a friend, Charles, for I suspect he is not quite so honest as you seem to think him, or you would not have wished him so near you. You have a singular taste, I think, to put a man with such a parcel of brats into a cottage which is in full view of your drawing-room windows."—"I like animation in a landscape," rejoined Eveleigh laughing, goodhumouredly, "Mrs. Bent-

ley and I agree on that point." Bentley looked a little foolish at this reference to his own statement of his wife's taste. "Well, look sharp after your game, that's all, for perhaps you may find a few hares cooking for the brats, if you pay a visit to your dairy farm-house at supper time."

"Are you really serious?" enquired Eveleigh gravely; "Have you any well-founded reason to think Burton is inclined to, or connected with poaching or poachers? I think I will give up for ever my faith in Lavater if he is not fair and honest. Surely that open front conceals not the nightly depredator."—"You may think as you please," replied Bentley, rather haughtily, "but you may judge if I have not some reason for my doubts of him, when I tell you that they are sufficient to make me at present avoid seeing him, or to satisfy him respecting the ten pounds he got for the piece of gold he found in the Five Acre, to which, as I have the manor, he has no right." Bentley

knew that he had nothing to justify his suspicion of Burton but the insinuations of Hardy, and the asperity of his manner was occasioned by the close question of Eveleigh, and his frank avowal of his contrary opinion of the cottager; Bentley had so long been accustomed to have every being around him yielding to his opinion, that any seeming contrariety appeared to him like the invasion of a natural right, and was quickly marked with evidences of displeasure. On his observation respecting his right, as lord of the manor, to the gold, Eveleigh mildly replied, "I am far from thinking it proper you should yield any thing to a person you justly suspect; but, my dear Bentley, I cannot think you will presume upon your right in this instance, where there is certainly so much poverty, and apparently so much industry, without being well assured of the utter unworthiness of the man."—"No, I don't mean to withhold it from the fellow, if I can prove he is honest in respect to the

game; but till I do, I am determined not to consent to his using the money, I should be a fool indeed if I did. I hope, however, Hardy and Jack Atkins, who is a 'cute fellow, will soon find out who takes my hares and birds, for there is no question but some have been busy about them."

The conversation now took a different turn, for Eveleigh was cautious how he disclosed what he knew of Hardy till he had made some further enquiries, lest, by a premature charge, he should defeat his own purpose of effectually undeceiving Bentley respecting the fidelity of a man in whom he placed such implicit confidence.

A circumstance, however, of a very simple nature, spared him the painful act of duty, of exposing the faults of one man in order to substantiate his good opinion of another.

The morning succeeding the conversation related, as Eveleigh and his visitor were walking in the grounds, they were



met by old William going up to the Grange upon some little errand. Eveleigh, as usual, spoke kindly and affably to him, and the old man was passing on, but suddenly stopped as if he recollected himself, and taking off his hat, while his soft silver hair waved in the breeze, displaying his fair forehead, scarcely furrowed with a wrinkle, said to Eveleigh, "May I make bold, your honour, to ax you what you think about spirits and ghosts, and goblins, and sich like things?" The abruptness and singularity of the question, the wild expression which the streaming of his hoary locks in the wind gave to the countenance of the old man, with his earnest and serious air, as he rested on his crutched stick, had such an irresistible effect on the risible faculties of Bentley, that he burst into a hearty laugh, and even Eveleigh's grave features relaxed to a smile more sunny than usual. Half laughing, he replied, "Your enquiry, William, would puzzle wiser men than me to answer. What

has induced you to ask the question? Have the fairies stolen your chickens, the goblins milked your cows, or the ghosts been playing a jig to the cheeses? I am inclined to believe," he added, (still observing the gravity of William,) "that if those who think they see spirits were to follow them pretty close, they would find them composed of flesh and blood, and not quite insensible to a few smart strokes of a stout cane. Fancy and doubt make many a coward."

"You are pleased to be merry about what I axed you, Sir; but that's what I say as you does, that I can't but think it is a good deal fancy when people are timmersome. I remember, when I was a boy, being mort frightened with a white cow in the hedge just after my uncle died; sure enough I thought he was comed again, he was mort severe man to me, and glad enough was I when the poor beast lowed when I got near her, and so I found out she was not my uncle comed back. Since

that time I have been in all sorts of lonely places, but I can't say I ever see'd any thing unnatural, as ye may say ; but I'll tell your honour, if you please, what made me ax the question of you, for seeing as how you are, as a body may say, book learned, I thought mayhap you could sartainly tell me about spirits."—"Well, let's have your ghost story, master," said Bentley, whose natural impatience betrayed itself during the prolix exordium of old William ; " we will have a goblin hunt, it will be new sport this dull weather." William, notwithstanding his avowed incredulity respecting spiritual appearances, seemed somewhat shocked at the levity of Bentley's manner ; and having, at his master's desire, resumed his hat, now proceeded to narrate his ghost story. " You must know, your honour," still addressing Eveleigh, " that my son-in-law, Robin Greenhill, went yesterday to the cattle fair at C——, and it was pretty late afore he comed home, though not so late by much

as some of the neighbours. Well, he was all alone, so, instead of going round by the wood, he thought he'd take the short cut by the common, (bad path as it is,) where the old house stands, though the path don't go very near it; not that Robin is a timmersome chap, far from it, he is as bold as a lion almost when he is provoked. But to be sure he was in a flusturation when he comed into the house, and as white as a sheet to one's thinking."—"What, did the sight of the old hall put him into this flusturation that you talk of then?" asked Bentley, laughing. "Oh no, your honour; but as I was telling you—let me see, where was I? Oh, I remember: when Robin comed in. Well, we naturally axed him, 'specially my daughter his wife, what made him so mazed, and after awhile, for he was all over of a shake, he told us, 'I had just got to the turn of the road,' says he, 'that leads, you know, down to the creek off the common, by the side where the gravel is dug and the stones

for ballast, when I saw a light wave—wave about the old house, now here, now there, just like a will-o'-wisp, and a noise like thunder muttering at a distance. I was not much daunted at this,' says Robin, 'and presently all was dark again and quite still. So says I to myself, there is nothing to hurt me, I think I have a clear conscience, and so I'll e'en go on. I had hardly said thus much to myself, and asked God Almighty to take care of me, when the light again appeared, and I was certain comed nearer and nearer to me; it flashed out so sudden, that it made me start back out of the path, and I slipped into a hole I reckon where they had been digging gravel. There was no moon up, and only here and there a twinkling star, so I was afeard to move for fear of getting into the water that stands pretty deep in many of the holes, so I stood quite still awhile; indeed, I seemed,' said Robin, poor fellow! 'as if I could not stir a step. The light still comed nearer and nearer, and pre-



sently something all in white, as big as a hay-rick to be sure, passed by me with a rustling sound, while flames of fire seemed to come from it, flash, flash. How long it remained I cannot tell, for I was so frightened that I fell outright into the hole, though, the powers be thanked, it was dry; and when I dared open my eyes, and recovered my feet, all was dark and silent again, only the wind whistled over the common. I took to my heels, and ran as fast as the rough path would let me, and right glad was I when I reached our gate, and saw the blaze of the fire through the hole of the shutter.' You may be sure, your honour," said old William, leaning with renewed force on his stick, "this account stammed us all, for Robin right surely believes he saw a spirit, and that if he had not fallen into the hole he would have been spirited away in the flame."—"I should think the spirit was in him rather than about him," observed Bentley, absolutely shaking with laughter.



“Your honour,” said William, as if he did not comprehend the joke. “Why, I should think he had made rather too free with the grog at the fair,” replied Bentley, “and his eyes twinkled a little.”—“No, your honour, I can’t think that neither, Robin is a main sober man as ye’d know, I never knewed him at all overcome with liquor but once in my days, and that was at my old master’s harvest supper three years now agone, and then he was only merry like; and I believe he was ’toxicated as much wi’ joy as with old beer and punch, for the squire told him as how he would be godfather to his next boy; and true enough, he was as good as his promise, for he stood at the church for that rosy little dog Henry, and put five pound into the saving bank for him that very day, saying, that and the *intrust* would bind him prentice if he lived. Oh, poor gentleman! he was right good to the poor, that’s sartain.” The recollection of his old master’s goodness, and his simple

eulogy, diverted the attention of old William from the subject of the ghost, though it was very evident that the incident had made a great impression on his credulity. Finding, however, Eveleigh and Bentley not disposed to regard it in the serious view he did himself, he was going away, but again paused, saying, "I have just bethought myself, your honour, that master Burton told me, Mr. Hardy had bought that old hall, and as we all know he neither fears God nor man like, (saving your presence, your honour," bowing to Bentley,) "mayhap the goblins have been raised to make him repent of his evil ways, and I hope, if it be God's will, that it may be so."—"Jerry is much obliged to you, master," said Bentley, in a tone of pique, not half liking the allusion to the well known character of Hardy. "I hope no offence," said the old man, as he touched his hat, perceiving Bentley's heightened colour. "Let them that find fault with Hardy look to themselves, that's all I

say," continued Bentley, walking on proudly, while William, bowing to Eveleigh, proceeded on his errand.

Bentley then expressed his belief that the whole was some trick of Burton's to conceal his nightly depredations; and he added, that he would see Hardy on his return, and investigate it.

"I think we had better go ghost-hunting ourselves," said Eveleigh playfully, for he saw that was the only way to treat the subject in the present state of Bentley's temper. "What say you, shall we to night examine

Touching this vision here;

though I suspect it is no honest ghost, *that* let me tell you."

Bentley was in reality not much disposed to leave the comforts of his friend's house for a ramble on a bleak common; but a little fear lest he might be suspected of cowardice, and a real desire to detect the depredators of his game, concurred in

making him accede to Eveleigh's proposal, and it was mutually agreed that they should sally forth on foot to the haunted mansion and its vicinity unattended, but well armed each with a stout stick, and provided with a small dark lanthorn. The night was well calculated to call up to the imagination those aerial forms with which it peoples the solitudes of night. All was silent and dark, save the fitful rushing of the blast as it passed through the almost leafless woods, and strewed with their crisped and withering forms the paths. Eveleigh and his friend silently trod, each occupied in far different trains of thought.

The scene, though mournful, was pleasing to the soul of Eveleigh, whose imagination, though disciplined, was easily acted upon by external objects or peculiar situations. Darkness naturally suggests to the mind the idea of mourning, and mourning was associated in the heart of Eveleigh with all that he had loved and enjoyed, persons and scenes now passed away. To

meditate upon these things was his "joy of grief;" hence, during the gloom of nature, he ever experienced that chastened seriousness which, while it somewhat shades the mind, cherishes its best feelings, calls it in upon itself, and inclines it to that high communion by which it must ever be exalted and refined. Mingled with these tender individual reflections, Eveleigh also meditated upon the story of old William; and though he well knew that no passion so entirely deprives men of accurate observation and judgment as terror, and that objects are invariably magnified when seen through the medium of a troubled imagination, he had not any doubt but that the alarmed Robin Greenhill had seen something of the nature he had described. The trick however, whatever it might be, Eveleigh by no means attributed to Burton; on the contrary, the conversation he had overheard between Hardy and his nephew convinced him he was the instigator, if not the actor in the plot: hence was Eveleigh

desirous that Bentley should himself investigate it.

Bentley, upon whose fancy the ever varying changes in natural scenery made no impression further than as they ministered to his pecuniary gain, as a good seed time and favourable harvest, or his vanity in being praised for his skill in agriculture, or his good fortune in possessing the prettiest spot in Essex, felt no other influence from the silence and solemnity of the scene than the physical inconvenience the chill produced in his frame by his removal from a comfortable apartment to a ramble through the grounds. His thoughts, if his vague reveries might be termed such, were chiefly occupied in plans for finding out Mansel and Burton, to whom he really attributed the appearances which had frightened Robin Greenhill, who offered a lively instance of physical strength and mental weakness, a strong imagination and feeble moral courage, for he was almost a giant in form, and by *day-light* ready to meet any man, whether as foe or friend.



Pursuing their way through the rustling paths of the plantations, the friends reached a lane, at the termination of which was the old house which had long been known as the haunted Hall, not having been inhabited within the memory of any individual of the parish, the estate being in chancery, and the heir a lunatic, whose recent death had freed it, and enabled Hardy to purchase it a bargain. Eveleigh and his friend, by the feeble light of the lanthorn, easily found their way into the grass grown court through the dilapidated gateway. The gate, which was of iron, stood half open, and the two massive buttresses which supported it were surmounted with a stone griffin, one of them headless. The lonely pile was half hidden by the shade of some ancient firs, through whose spreading branches the wind now whistled mournfully. The building was of quadrangular form, the door-way exhibiting some curious carving, and the circular steps in a state of dangerous decay. Eveleigh, in a low voice, re-

marked, "Our forefathers loved to admit the blessed light of heaven, if we may judge by the multitude of windows in this mansion." They were preserved from destruction, however, by boards nailed before them, leaving only very narrow openings to admit an imperfect light to the rooms within.

The feeble light of the taper he carried enabled Eveleigh to observe the windows, but all was dark within; and on Bentley's endeavouring to unfasten the door, a branch of the untrained vine which covered with its trailing tendrils the front of the house, flapped in his face, and two or three bats were roused from their hiding places. "These are some of the spirits, I suppose," he observed, as he broke off the annoying branch, and waved it to disperse the frightened vermin. "I am come out for something to be kissed by the bats and flogged by the vines; but let us go on a little further." They now perambulated the premises as well as they could, but at

the hazard of many a stumble and fall ; the gardens were extensive, laid out in the fashion of the fifteenth century ; terraces one below another, communicating by steps now in a state of ruin, the low walls only being preserved from a similar dilapidation by the profusion of ivy with which they were mantled.

Having walked repeatedly round this desolated spot without discovering the smallest indication of its being inhabited either by mortal beings or spirits of air, but scaring from their retreats some owls and bats, Bentley's impatience preponderated over his curiosity, and he said, " We seem upon a fool's errand, Eveleigh, for Heaven's sake let us resume our famous bottle of port, and leave the spirits to gambol at their pleasure in this old hall," and he shook the massive door with a violence that threatened to force it from its bolts and hinges. The noise echoed through the interior, and roused a colony of owls from the holes, and with flapping wing they flew heavily

along the court. "We have roused a few more of the sprites however," said Bentley, "let us leave them to their surprise, they have not had such a salutation many a year, I dare say;—whoot, a whoot, a whoot!"—"Hush," said Eveleigh, as he took his arm, "remember the spirits we seek may have ears."

They now repassed the broken gate, and taking a circuitous path, after much difficulty entered that in which Robin had met with his alarm. "Perhaps we may meet the goblin here," said Eveleigh; it may perhaps have quitted the house for its evening airing before our arrival there." They walked slowly on for some time, when Eveleigh, out of mere curiosity, turned round to see if he could perceive any thing of the old house from the path they were then pursuing. At the instant, he perceived a dim light through the mist which pervaded the atmosphere; he grasped the arm of Bentley, and directed him to observe the object that had attracted his

attention. "There it is, by heaven!" said Bentley, in a low voice, "we shall nab them at last; there, it surely moves. Come on, my spirit, come on, this good stick will soon prove if you are 'thin air,' or flesh and sinew."—"It certainly is coming this way," said Eveleigh, and evidently is nearer; let us wait here its approach."—"Agreed," said Bentley, "but take care of *your* light, or it will betray us."—"It is safe," said the other, and they each placed themselves close to the path, so that it was not possible for any thing to pass them unobserved.

The light came slowly but regularly on, and seemed to enlarge as it approached, apparently being much elevated above the ground. Eveleigh imagined he heard a sound like footsteps, but he forbid his imagination to be active, and in silence awaited the approach of the vision. In a very short time a figure in white made its appearance, certainly taller than any man, and at the summit of the mass was a hollow



globe through which a pale light issued, while from two apertures a brighter flame proceeded. That this was the apparition which had so alarmed poor Robin there could be no doubt, and the friends seemed actuated by one impulse when they at the same moment seized it as it was passing the spot where they stood. "O gemmini, don't kill me!" exclaimed the ghost;—"Isaac, boy, run back to the Hall, and tell uncle we are caught." The strong grasp of Eveleigh and Bentley thus elicited the affair beyond their most sanguine hope. Eveleigh turned his light towards the visage of the trembling captive, the features, though evidently distorted by extreme terror and unexpected detected guilt, were unknown to him, but the same survey on the part of Bentley immediately confirmed the suspicion which the words of the delinquent had excited.

Fortunately a lad, who accompanied the depredator, was too much terrified at the suddenness of the attack to observe or



obey the caution of his leader to return to the hall, which would have betrayed to the mover and instigator of the conspiracy the danger he had incurred. Bentley seized on the almost torpid youth, and threatened to blow his brains out if he attempted to move. In the mean time, Eveleigh was examining the other prisoner, who proved to be the well-instructed Jack Atkins, conveying to a vessel lying in the creek some sacks of fine corn, the property of Bentley, and a heavy load of game.

His whole appearance was adopted for the purpose of alarming whatever passengers he was likely to meet in his nightly depredations, which had been carried on a considerable time, and since the purchase of the old Hall, it had been made a most convenient receptacle for the stolen property, which remained there safely deposited, ready for occasional exportation or home consumption as customers were found. The dress of the thief consisted of a very long white smock frock;

his rough shoes were concealed beneath a pair formed of black list, that his voiceless tread might not alarm or indicate his mortality; on his head was placed a stout basket frame on which he bore a sack of corn, the weight of which habit alone could have enabled him to bear. On this was fixed an immense turnip scooped with such scrupulous care and nicety, that it really formed no despicable demi-transparent lamp: two holes were ingeniously cut in it, and a *wax* candle was firmly placed within. Round his waist was a strong belt, well laden with three or four hares and as many pheasants, and he bore in one hand a long pole also supplied with some fine game from Bentley's manor. When a man confides without reserve in another, who is solely directed by worldly principles, it seldom happens but he finds himself deceived, and as the barrier of confidence is broken down, the flood of suspicion flows in with tenfold force. Thus it was with Bentley: there was now demonstrative

evidence of Jack Atkins's guilt, and by implication that of Hardy was equally certain.

To the loss of his game was added that he never suspected, his corn, and most likely of every thing that had been confided to the mercenary bailiff. "Upon your peril tell me, you villain," he said, with a dreadful oath to the trembling thief, "who is your partner in this infernal trade, and how long you have been robbing me?" Atkins, whose guilt could be too easily proved to attempt evasion, destitute of any principle which would have urged him to save his uncle from a similar obloquy, immediately replied, he had no other partner than his uncle, who had 'ticed him with a promise of sharing the gains, and by telling him he would find it a good and safe thing."—"And who is this?" enquired Bentley, pointing to the boy whom he held, and who was also laden with the spoil. "Why, Isaac, the deaf boy from the work-house; uncle took him 'prentice for nothing, and he must do as he is bid; I must

need say, he don't know but these things are mine and my uncle's." And where is the rascal who has thus robbed, deceived, gulled me?" said Bentley, in a voice that resounded in the stillness of night. "I left him at the old house getting some more things ready, for he told me we must work all night to night, because the vessel is in the creek, and master was not at home."

Imprecations and vociferations followed this communication, but as the language was by no means choice, we forbear to repeat it; the result however was, the peremptory command of Bentley to be conducted the nearest path to the old house, that the old thief might be caught in his own snare.

While they slowly took the road which the terror-struck villain appeared well to know, Bentley asked, "And how did you take your ill-gotten gains to the old house?"—"Why, in the tumbril, to be sure; we could do that any time, because, if any questions were axed, we said the old house was

going to be repaired, so we put a few bricks or boards on the top."

At length they once more reached the desolate court of this now criminal depository. Atkins, when they arrived at the door, applied a key which he had to the lock, and it easily opened. They entered a spacious, but much dilapidated hall, from which ascended a broad staircase of easy ascent, the balustrades, mouldings, and fronts of which displayed carving of no little richness and even elegance, rendered very apparent by the strong light which streamed from the vegetable lamp as they entered, while the other parts of the hall were enveloped in dark shade, except a portion of it illuminated by a stream of light proceeding through the half open door of an apartment on the right side of the hall. The whole party entered silently, which continued a few minutes, only interrupted by the noise of the decayed boards as they gave way beneath the tread of those who passed over them. Eveleigh



was approaching an immense table which stood in the middle of the hall, even the novel situation in which he was not diminishing his curiosity respecting any thing pertaining to "the olden time," and Bentley was just dragging his prisoners to the room from whence the light proceeded, when a voice, all knew to be Hardy's, called, "Jack, come here; why, where the devil have you been so long? If I arn't almost tired with waiting, sure you are the slowest rascal on the face of the earth; well, have ye shipped the goods, and brought the gin?"—"No, you rascal, he has neither shipped the goods nor brought the gin," exclaimed Bentley, in a voice which echoed through the hall, and seemed to reverberate through the desolate chambers of the once proud mansion; and he rushed with his affrighted prisoners into the room, followed by Eveleigh, who, perceiving Hardy, instantly seized a fowling-piece which stood in the corner of the room, prepared for the resistance of the



detected villain. But the heart of Hardy was too sordid, and his principles were too weak, to be susceptible of shame, or of that desperate courage which rushes to the consummation of its guilt by voluntary contest.

Accustomed ever to listen to the vile counsels of his selfishness, instead of the still small voice of conscience, that interior authority was become weak and perverted; greatly, therefore, as he was surprised at the exclamation and sudden entrance of his credulous master, he had been too long a successful adept in hypocrisy and dissimulation to be thrown off his guard. Raising himself therefore from the ground, on which he was kneeling, measuring some fine wheat, he turned to the furious Bentley, at the same time glancing at the fowling-piece Eveleigh had possessed himself of, saying, "Take care of that gun, for it is charged pretty high, I can tell you."

"Hey day, master!" he added coolly to Bentley, "here is a passion you are in;

why, what is the matter ; and what makes you, Jack, look such a fool ? Don't you remember," he added, without waiting for Jack's reply, or apparently regarding Bentley's passion, "I told you that I and Jack had laid a train to catch the rogues if you'd be patient ; but if you meddled and made with it, you would blow it up and be the sufferer. We should soon have got the proof against our busy neighbours."

This shameless insinuation, when surrounded with the evidences of his own guilt, threw Bentley into a furious passion, and caused the blood to chill in the honourable heart of Eveleigh. "And how can you prove," said Hardy insolently, "that I have got any of your property ? and how can you prove I am going to make money of it ? I defy you to prove any thing against me. Arn't I trusted with your corn, and mayn't I put it on my own premises if I thinks 'tis proper ?"

This storm of insolence, however, was soon allayed, when Bentley in passionate

language made known to the villain that Jack had so little profited by his lessons as to have completely betrayed him and his nefarious depredations, and had even intimated that he would be an evidence against his tutor in wickedness. Alarm evidently had found its way to the obdurate heart of Hardy on this intimation; for although a stranger to every moral affection, he was not quite insensible to the perspective of his earthly destiny, opened by the conviction of his guilt. In the chaos of his present sensations, the dread of the dangers to which the discovery of his crimes inevitably would expose him, was now predominant, and with the inconsistency which so frequently marks the conduct of villains, he abjectly offered to disclose the enormity of his offence, and to make any restitution, provided Bentley would allow him to quit the country. This proposal Bentley rejected with disdain, declaring that the law should take its course, for he would not attempt to avert or to mitigate its rigour.

The next question was, how to secure their prisoners, who, had not guilt rendered them cowardly, might have escaped from them.

The only course was to avail themselves of this deficiency, and to threaten with instant death should they attempt escape or resistance. Having done this, they determined they should attend them to Westwood Grange, and accordingly they commanded the criminals to accompany them.

When a generous mind, endued perhaps with some virtuous qualities; has depraved itself by crime, it revolts from contempt, is susceptible of shame; but those who have made no account of morality, who have been restrained by no principle from following the devices of their own corrupt inclinations, are totally insensible to the opinion that may be formed of them when their conduct is unmasked, and they stand forth in all their moral deformity, a gazing-stock to the world they have injured and deceived. Surely the very possibility, that by giving loose to his passions, man is ca-

pable of falling into this state of moral torpidity, is sufficient to alarm the mind from any thing that may tend to involve it in such deplorable apathy, and to exalt our gratitude to the Giver of that divine ray, which unfolds to us the assurance of a preventing and restraining grace which will preserve our steps from the devious paths of sin, do we but sincerely and earnestly implore it.

Hardy, after sullenly answering several peremptory questions of Bentley, was obliged to obey his commands, enforced with no little exertion of muscular force, and the whole party quitted the desolate place for Westwood Grange. The moon had now risen brightly, and while she rode in calm majesty on a light fleecy cloud, threw her silvery beams on every object around.

“ Emblem of purity and peace,” thought Eveleigh, “ how strong a contrast dost thou present to the interior world of man, the seat of turbulent passions, depraved inclinations, and insatiable desires ! Thou in



thy waxing and thy waning, art equally lovely; he, in the aspirings of youth, or the grovelling passions of age, is equally the victim of internal storm, tempest, and misrule. There is but one star to direct his way, from this he wilfully averts his regards, or contemns its guiding light."

Thus thought Eveleigh, as with his uncongenial companions he pursued the path now clearly visible by the unclouded light of the pale luminary. At length they arrived at the Grange: they had been absent so much longer a time than they had calculated upon, that the servants were in great perplexity, and not without alarm; and great indeed was their surprise to see who accompanied their master and his friend.

Such, however, was the well-known character of Hardy, that every one expressed satisfaction at his detection; and the proper steps being immediately taken, he underwent an examination by a civil magistrate, the result of which was his



committal to the county prison with his pupil and dupe Jack Atkins; while the poor boy, who had been the mere passive instrument of their will, was put into safe custody with a cottager.

It is not our intention to follow up the detail of the proceedings against Hardy, as it would swell our little volume beyond its assigned limits; it must suffice to say, that his nephew turned evidence against him, and that a series of felonious acts were disclosed which fully rendered him obnoxious to capital punishment.

Hardy had entered the prison an infidel indeed, if not one actually in thought, for an unseen judgment, an unseen state of punishment, had not had sufficient power to deter him from acts which must meet the one, and incur the other.

A prison was, alas! not the scene very well calculated to awaken him from this slumber of conscience. Amongst the criminals that crowd the cells of our prisons,

few, very few indeed, entertain those ideas of death which connect it with the realities of an eternal world. They may be heard indeed to speak of death as far as physical suffering is involved, but as to any sense of its being the portal which opens to them that endless state of being in which they will have to taste the wrath of the God whose laws they have violated, whose commands they have contemned, as to any appreciation of his purity, the demands and extent of his holy law, or any fears of the consequences of its violation, few know, and fewer still feel them.

One act of justice, however, this long practised hardened sinner did before the period of his trial: he fully corroborated the account of Jack Atkins, that Mansel and Burton were altogether innocent of the charge against them, which revenge had induced Hardy to make, Mansel having once, during a parish dinner, in which he had been insulted by Hardy, insinuated that he was not a faithful servant to Bent-

ley; and poor Burton was included in the resentment, because he was befriended by the *insolent* Mansel. Several months intervened between the period of Hardy's committal and the assizes; at length the time approached, and so strong was the evidence collected against him, that no one thought he could escape the just forfeiture he had incurred. A sort of sullen apathy was his usual frame of mind, except when occasionally excited by the artificial stimulus of spirits, which he contrived to procure through the medium of some of the prisoners. He refused to see his wife or other relatives, saying "he wanted no whining or crying, that his enemies wanted his life, and they might have it for what he cared." He was inaccessible to the exhortations and admonitions of the chaplain, and appeared to think that the forfeiture of his life was full expiation for the injury he had committed, and as to what might follow, he seemed insensible of its terrors, and dead to its hopes.

In this state he remained till within two days of the time fixed for his trial, when the turnkey, on entering his cell as usual in the morning, perceived he was not risen as was his customary practice. The man approached the pallet and called him, but receiving no answer, was going to shake in order to rouse him, when he observed his eyes glazed, and fixed in a horrid glare. The wretched man had been seized with a fit of apoplexy, and was at the moment dead to all external objects or feeling, though his pulse beat feebly, and his heart quickly vibrated. Medical aid was immediately procured, but all effort was unavailing to kindle the vital flame, and a few hours consigned the unrepenting Hardy to that silent grave whose terrors he had defied.

“ Oh, 'twas a horrid sight to see him stretched  
In his last narrow bed,  
His unclosed eyes, clench'd hand, bared teeth  
Fix'd in the strength of the last terrible agony.”

This event created a great sensation in the neighbourhood, as did the sale of the deceased Hardy's effects : upon the investigation of whose affairs it was discovered that he had for many years been enriching himself at the expense of others : that he had contracted debts, which he had by various pretexts evaded paying. A small surplus only remained therefore for the widow, who immediately quitted the neighbourhood ; while Jack Atkins was sent under strict vigilance to one of the new agricultural foreign settlements, where he was employed as a labourer, upon promise of every encouragement should he conduct himself honestly and industriously. Burton, being perfectly exonerated from all participation or connection with poachers, of course was permitted to retain the ten pounds, which he immediately invested as proposed, in the savings-bank for his children. As a compensation for his being obliged to quit his cottage, Bentley consented that his brother, an industrious lad,

whom he had brought up, and who was a workman in a farm near, should become the occupier, therefore Burton had the happiness of frequently visiting his favourite trees, and his children to encourage the hope of tasting some "big gooseberries."

Eveleigh, who had observed with pain the illiberal policy of Bentley in respect to his cottagers and workmen, greatly desired to direct his attention to their moral condition and happiness, especially of the rising race. But Eveleigh plainly saw he had long-cherished prejudices to subdue, and that he must prove the practical results of his own enlightened plans before he could hope to have them imitated or even approved by his friend, to whom his arguments, however gently and patiently enforced, were not pleasing, because directly opposed to his preconceived opinions and his long practice. The parish of Westwood indeed already was prepared, by the benevolence of Mr. Brom-



ley, for those further improvements it was the delightful employment of Eveleigh to effect. In this secluded village was already seen that most pleasing of all subjects of contemplation, the most unaffected piety, and all its train of lovely moral virtue, amongst the simple peasantry. Here cheerful industry was seen fulfilling its duties in an exemplary manner; and so sweet was the example offered by many an individual, that a general spirit was diffused, and the children of this hamlet were an evidence of the power of parental example, as they exhibited the most pleasing indications of proper discipline, intelligence, civility, and attention, of obedience to their parents, respect to their superiors, and reverence for religion and its sacred institutions. This was a genial soil wherein to plant the germs of usefulness and prosperity, a soil which could not fail to cherish the flowers of happiness and virtuous content. The energies of such a peasantry required but the directing hand of knowledge and poli-

tical science to render them a blessing to the country, and a part of its most valuable treasure ; and Eveleigh determined that his patriotic endeavours should not be wanting to effect the work of encouragement of industry, and the reduction of that now debasing relief the poors' rate. For these purposes, he divided a certain portion of his land into small allotments at a very moderate rent to married labourers. Upon this land, with the assistance of a little common grazing, they were in most instances, even with a family, soon able to keep a cow and a pig, to raise more than sufficient vegetables for their family, to add materially to their comfort in minor respects, and even after a short time enabled to contribute to the parish funds, instead of being consumers of them. At the same time the labourer, on his return from work, was assured of a neat and comfortable home, therefore had no inducement to visit the public-house ; their leisure was happily passed in the bosom of their family, all

aiding in the cultivation and even the simple embellishment of their little spot of ground. The rent was always regularly paid, from the fear of being ejected from a spot they had in a manner created, and the land was as well, if not better cultivated than any in the parish. It was indeed a most pleasing sight, when passing these cottages of an evening, to see the sturdy labourer occupied in his garden, or his little inclosure, sometimes looking with laudable pride upon his goodly row of beans, as they sent forth their fragrance in the evening breeze; sometimes training over his rustic arbour the flaunting sweet pea, the bright scarlet runner, the elegant nasturtium, or the starry jasmine. Sometimes two or three half-clothed cherubs would patiently await the severing of the firmest cabbages, which each was emulous to bear to mother, to be cooked for father's supper, while the scattered leaves were gathered up for piggy-wiggy or the cow, whose eager gaze over the rail di-

viding her pasture from the garden, was fixed upon the anticipated morsel, while her faint low seemed to ask relief from her rich burden, as much anticipated by the juvenile group. Often was seen, rosy with healthful exercise, and blithe with the feeling of comfort and domestic happiness, the rustic mistress of these neat cottages, sometimes singing, while she milked her docile cow; sometimes seated at the door knitting, while her children were playing on the green; and not unfrequently, when twilight threw its soft mantle over the little village, was the cheerful blaze of many a fire seen through the casements, and the savoury odours of fried pork mingled with the perfume of the stocks, the roses and sweet-briar which adorned the little flower-bed in front of the dwelling, announcing to the industrious husband that his supper awaited him. These are "simple annals of the poor," which might be long, long dwelt upon, for they are the *real joys* of life. We could tell of that unob-

trusive piety which talks not of its sanctity, which says not, "Come not near, for I am holier than thou, but of that meek and quiet principle which builds its altar in the heart, and to it brings its morning, its evening, its noon-day sacrifice, an offering well pleasing to Him who emphatically styles himself the friend of the poor, the refuge of the destitute, the rewarder of uprightness, the hearer of prayer. How inestimable is that sentiment, that principle which thus, like the sun, sheds its blessings on all men, which gives confidence and consolation to the poorest as well as the most wealthy; its hopes, its high privileges, are common property to all those who seek it, and can be as securely enjoyed under the lowly roof of the cottage as beneath the splendid dome of a palace. Ah! how shall we sufficiently reprobate those daring and proud spirits, who seek to deprive their poor brethren of that strong hold of consolation and confidence they derive from the conviction of their



relation to their Creator, when he invites them in his ordinances to confide their sorrows to Him, and to find in the high communion, resignation, and tranquillity! Which raises them in their own eyes, and prevents their sinking under the weight of misfortune, oppression, or contempt, and confers that moral courage which enables them to resist the pride of human greatness! That the sequestered village of Westwood was not cursed by the presence and influence of any of those dark sceptic spirits, who refuse to believe what comes not immediately within the limited range of their mental vision, and assiduously endeavour to draw others into their own obscured circle, was a subject of real thankfulness to Eveleigh, as he well knew that the moral atmosphere of many a village was thus poisoned, beneath whose blasting influence the flowers of happiness drooped and died, and the noxious weeds of licentiousness, crime, and misery, alone were seen.



The benevolent plans of Eveleigh were also greatly aided and diffused by the young clergyman of the parish, who, though only a curate, with a stipend amounting not to a tythe of the value of the incumbency, fulfilled to the extent of his ability the pastoral duties of his cure, and was regarded universally with esteem and affection for his activity, usefulness, and genuine piety, prompting him to whatsoever things are lovely and of good report.

Thus pursuing, in concert, an enlightened and rational plan of improvement, Eveleigh and his coadjutor were not long in reaping their reward in the contemplation of the good conduct, attentive observation of their several duties, the comfort and happiness of the simple people, whose well-being occupied their attention.

Every neighbouring family of respectability were anxious to engage their domestics from the village of Westwood, and very many gave honourable testimony of

their judicious education by the exemplary tenor of their conduct as servants.

Having thus generally glanced at the peasantry of this most pleasant village, we shall take our leave of it at present by observing, that among the many eminently distinguished from individuals of their class of life in other villages less blessed with instruction, example, and encouragement, the family of the skilful ploughman, Harry Burton, ranked high for their exemplary discharge of their relative and social duties : the sons proved industrious, steady, and excellent workmen, the daughters inherited all the housewifely skill of their mother, and both offered lively instances that the most effectual and important instruction the young can receive rests not in the mechanical routine of a school, however well disciplined, but in the example placed before them at home by their parents : for the example of those to whom nature and intercourse unites us, sinks deep into the young heart, which is prone to

dismiss from thought the lessons of those whom they are obliged to obey, or incur punishment. They also abundantly proved, that however humble a man's station in life may be, he is dignified and respectable if he fulfils its duties simply and unaffectedly, and pretends to nothing beyond it.

Often, very often, would old William and dame Green, when sitting in the warm corner by Harry Burton's fire, talk over their young days, recount to their juvenile auditory the examples of misery they had known to follow vicious courses, in those with whom they had begun life, but now long since consigned to the grave; and often would they contrast the state of Westwood when they were boy and girl, with that it at present enjoyed; and declare, if children were not good now, they never could be, seeing as how they had so much instruction and so much encouragement.

Rest and quietude are the luxuries of age, and these ancient and faithful domes-

ties long enjoyed them, with grateful hearts declaring that they were never happier in their lives, but ready to quit this world for another whenever the Almighty saw fit. This peaceful calm of mind and entire resignation shed a sweet placidity, a constant cheerfulness over the temper of these aged cottagers; they were loved by all when living, and when, like a shock of matured corn, they were gathered to the garner, they were universally regretted, and their example cited on every occasion in which it was necessary to prove—

“ That still in duty's path, though rough it be,  
Great sweetness is.”

Harry Burton and his family still continue to be living instances of this truth, and often, when surrounded with his children on any particular occasion in which they meet all together at the dairy-house, does he revert to that evening when, seated with him on the rough wood scattered on the green before his cottage door, he ob-

**THE FORTUNATE EMPLOY. 227**

ned from Bentley the job of ploughing  
; "Five Acre," which first introduced  
n to the knowledge of his good master  
leigh, and therefore might be most  
itly called "THE FORTUNATE EMPLOY."

**THE END.**

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